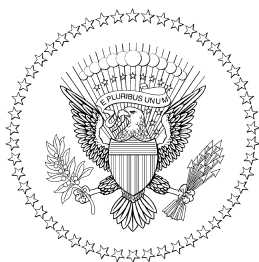


Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



Monday, July 10, 2006
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WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

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Week Ending Friday, July 7, 2006

Memorandum on Implementation of Sections 603 and 604 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2003 (Public Law 107-228)

June 30, 2006

Presidential Determination No. 2006-17

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Implementation of Sections 603 and 604 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2003 (Public Law 107-228)

Consistent with the authority contained in section 604 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2003 (Public Law 107-228) (the “Act”), and with reference to the determinations set out in the report to the Congress transmitted on the date hereof, pursuant to section 603 of that Act, regarding noncompliance by the PLO and the Palestinian Authority with certain commitments, I hereby impose the sanction set out in section 604(a)(2), “Downgrade in Status of the PLO Office in the United States.” This sanction is imposed for a period of 180 days from the date hereof or until such time as the next report required by section 603 of the Act is transmitted to the Congress, whichever is later. You are authorized and directed to transmit to the appropriate Congressional committees the report described in section 603 of the Act.

Furthermore, I hereby determine that it is in the national security interest of the United States to waive that sanction, pursuant to section 604(c) of the Act. This waiver shall be effective for a period of 180 days from the date hereof or until such time as the next report required by section 603 of the Act is transmitted to the Congress, whichever is later.

You are hereby authorized and directed to transmit this determination to the Congress and to publish it in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President’s Radio Address

July 1, 2006

Good morning. Laura and I wish all Americans a safe and happy Fourth of July weekend. I’m looking forward to spending Independence Day with members of our Armed Forces and their families at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. These brave men and women risk their lives to defend the ideals of our founding generation, and I will have the honor of thanking many of them personally for their service in freedom’s cause.

In 1776, John Adams predicted to his wife, Abigail, that America’s Independence Day would be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. He wrote that “this anniversary should be commemorated with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, bells, bonfires, and illuminations from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward, forever more.”

Since then, generations of Americans have done just that. Each year, we look forward to the family gatherings and the grand celebrations that take place across the Nation on the Fourth of July. And amid the music and barbeques and fireworks, we give thanks for our freedom, and we honor the bravery and sacrifices of all those who have made that freedom possible.

On Independence Day, we recall the courage and high ideals of our Nation’s Founders, who waged a desperate fight to overcome tyranny and live in freedom. Recent years have brought a renewed interest in the lives and achievements of our Founders, and we have learned once again that they possessed extraordinary talents as well as ordinary human failings, which only makes their accomplishments all the more remarkable.

For the brave men and women of our founding generation, victory was far from certain. They were certain only of the cause they served—the belief that freedom is the gift of God and the right of all mankind. The strength of their convictions made possible the birth of the free Nation in which we are blessed to live.

On the Fourth of July, we also honor the sacrifices made by each American generation to secure the promises of the Declaration of Independence. For more than two centuries, from the camps of Valley Forge to the mountains of Afghanistan, Americans have served and sacrificed for the principles of our founding.

Today, a new generation of American patriots is defending our freedom against determined and ruthless enemies. At this hour, the men and women of our Armed Forces are facing danger in distant places, carrying out their missions with all the skill and honor we expect of them. And their families are enduring long separations from their loved ones with great courage and dignity. Our troops and our military families deserve all our support and gratitude, and on this Fourth of July weekend, I ask every American to find a way to thank those who defend our freedom. To find out about efforts in your community, please visit the web site americasupportsyou.mil.

As we celebrate the Fourth, we also remember that the promises of liberty contained in our Declaration apply to all people. Because Americans believe that freedom is an unalienable right, we value the freedom of every person in every nation. And because we are committed to the God-given worth of every life, we strive to promote respect for human dignity. Today, all who live in tyranny and all who yearn for freedom can know that America stands with them.

As citizens of this good Nation, we should be proud of our heritage, grateful for our liberty, and confident in our future. Two hundred and thirty years after America declared its independence, the spirit of '76 lives on. And our Nation remains proud to carry freedom's torch. We still place our trust in the protections of divine providence. We still pledge our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred

honor to freedom's defense. And we still believe in the promise of freedom for all.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:45 a.m. on June 30 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 1. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 30 but embargoed for release until broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

**Executive Order 13409—
Establishing an Emergency Board To
Investigate a Dispute Between
Southeastern Pennsylvania
Transportation Authority and its
Locomotive Engineers Represented
by the Brotherhood of Locomotive
Engineers and Trainmen**

July 3, 2006

A dispute exists between Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) and its employees represented by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET).

The dispute has not heretofore been adjusted under the provisions of the Railway Labor Act, as amended, 45 U.S.C. 151–188 (RLA).

A party empowered by the RLA has requested that the President establish an emergency board pursuant to section 9A of the RLA (45 U.S.C. 159a).

Section 9A(c) of the RLA provides that the President, upon such request, shall appoint an emergency board to investigate and report on the dispute.

Now, Therefore, by the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 9A of the RLA, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Establishment of Emergency Board (Board). There is established, effective 12:01 a.m. eastern daylight time on July 8, 2006, a Board of three members to be appointed by the President to investigate and report on this dispute. No member shall be

pecuniarily or otherwise interested in any organization of railroad employees or any carrier. The Board shall perform its functions subject to the availability of funds.

Sec. 2. Report. The Board shall report to the President with respect to this dispute within 30 days of its creation.

Sec. 3. Maintaining Conditions. As provided by section 9A(c) of the RLA, from the date of the creation of the Board and for 120 days thereafter, no change in the conditions out of which the dispute arose shall be made by the parties to the controversy, except by agreement of the parties.

Sec. 4. Records Maintenance. The records and files of the Board are records of the Office of the President and upon the Board's termination shall be maintained in the physical custody of the National Mediation Board.

Sec. 5. Expiration. The Board shall terminate upon the submission of the report provided for in section 2 of this order.

George W. Bush

The White House,
July 3, 2006.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register,
8:45 a.m., July 6, 2006]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on July 7.

Remarks at an Independence Day Celebration at Fort Bragg, North Carolina

July 4, 2006

Thank you all. Thanks for the warm welcome. It's a pleasure to be back here at Fort Bragg—home of our Airborne and Special Forces.

I flew down on Air Force One, and our pilot, Colonel Tillman, he said, "I can open the hatch and drop you out by parachute." [Laughter] I said he had the wrong President Bush. [Laughter] Old '41, I call him—who happens to be my dad—has jumped five times with the Golden Knights of Fort Bragg. Mother appreciates you helping him down safely. [Laughter] He's the only skydiving President, and that's a distinction I think he's going to keep. [Laughter]

Ever since I left the White House this morning, I've been looking forward to coming here and saying, "Hooah!"

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. It's a pleasure to get out of Washington, to spend some time in the real "center of the universe." It's good to be with the men and women of the 8th [18th]* Airborne Corps and the quiet professionals of the Army Special Operations Command.

I can't think of a better way to spend the Fourth of July than with the All Americans of the 82d Airborne. You're Airborne all the way, and I'm proud to be here with you. We also welcome the men and women of Pope Air Force base, who put the "air" in Airborne. I'm privileged to be in the presence of so many courageous military families who have borne the hardships of war with dignity and devotion. By supporting a loved one in uniform, you are serving our country, and America is grateful for your service and your sacrifice.

Today we mark the 230th anniversary of American independence. And on this day, when we give thanks for our freedom, we also give thanks for the men and women who make our freedom possible. Each of you have stepped forward to serve, knowing the risks and dangers that accompany freedom's defense.

I've come to thank you for your valor and to thank you for your patriotism. I've come to share with you and with the American people how your dedication and your sacrifice are helping us win the war on terror. You are serving our country at a time when our country needs you. And because of your courage, every day is Independence Day in America.

Laura sends her best and her love. I'm a lucky man that she said yes when I asked her to marry me. I appreciate Lieutenant General John Vines for his introduction. I want to thank all the commanding officers, all the sergeant majors, all who wear our uniform for welcoming me here today. It's a pleasure to be with you.

I'm honored to be here with Senator Richard Burr, United States Senator from the State of North Carolina. He strongly supports

* White House correction.

the men and women who wear the uniform. And I'm proud to serve with him in Washington, DC.

I want to thank all the local officials who are here. Thank you for supporting the good folks who live here and work here and train here. It means a lot to the families to know that the local communities extend the hand of friendship and support.

Two hundred and thirty years ago, 56 brave men signed their names to a document that set the course of our Nation. It changed the history of the world. Our Declaration of Independence was a bold statement of revolutionary principles. It laid down a creed of freedom and equality that has lifted the lives of hundreds of millions here in America and around the world. Yet without the courage of the soldiers of our Continental Army, the words of the Declaration would have been forgotten by history, dismissed as the radical musings of a failed revolution.

We celebrate Independence Day each year because that ragtag group of citizen soldiers challenged the world's most powerful military, secured our liberty, and planted a standard of freedom to which the entire world has aspired.

Since that first Fourth of July, some 43 million Americans have defended our freedom in times of war. These brave men and women crossed oceans and continents to defeat murderous ideologies and to secure the peace for generations that followed. We live in liberty because of the courage they displayed. From Bunker Hill to Baghdad, from Concord to Kabul—on this Independence Day, we honor their achievements and we thank them for their service in freedom's cause.

At this hour the men and women of Fort Bragg are carrying on this great legacy, facing danger in distant lands, and carrying out their missions with all the skill and honor we expect of them. In a time when the terrorists have attacked our homeland and hope to strike again, Americans take comfort in knowing that the soldiers of Fort Bragg are on duty and standing watch for our freedom.

Fort Bragg is the home to some of our country's best and bravest, the men and women of the United States Army Special Operations Command. Army Special Forces

define their mission in a motto: "To Liberate the Oppressed." And in the war on terror, you've done just that, overthrowing cruel regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq and bringing freedom to more than 50 million people.

Green Berets were the first U.S. forces on the ground in both Operation Enduring Freedom and our Operation Iraqi Freedom. And along with others, you remain on the offense against the terrorists today. A few weeks ago, I had a chance to visit Baghdad and visit with some of Fort Bragg's finest soldiers, the special operation forces who helped bring justice to the terrorist Zarqawi.

They were the first coalition forces to arrive on the scene after the bombing of Zarqawi's safe house. They administered compassionate medical care to a man who showed no compassion to his victims. And when this brutal terrorist took his final breath, one of the last things he saw was the face of an American soldier from Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

We're on the offense. In the weeks since Zarqawi's death, coalition and Iraqi forces have launched more than 190 raids on targets across the country. We've captured more than 700 enemy operatives and killed some 60 more. In these raids, we've uncovered caches of weapons and suicide vests and Iraqi army uniforms to be used as disguises in brutal terrorist attacks. We've seized new intelligence information that is helping us keep the pressure on the terrorists and the insurgents. At this moment of vulnerability for the enemy, we will continue to strike their network, we will disrupt their operations, and we will bring their leaders to justice.

Last week, Iraqi security forces announced the capture of an Al Qaida terrorist from Tunisia named Abu Qadama. He's one of the men responsible for the bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samara. The Golden Mosque is one of Shi'a Islam's holiest sites, and the terrorists blew it up in the hope that this vicious act would provoke sectarian reprisals and drag the nation into civil war and derail the formation of a unity government. Hundreds of Iraqis were killed in the violence that ensued.

But in the end, Iraqis stepped back from the abyss. They want to live in a free and

peaceful society. Their mothers are no different from the mothers here in America who want their children to grow up and be able to realize dreams. They came together to form a new Government. Iraqi and coalition forces, by working together, have brought justice to a key player in the Samara attack. We're going to continue to strike blows against the terrorists. We'll continue working to support Iraq's new Government.

When I spoke here a year ago, Iraqis still had a Transitional Government that was operating under an administrative law issued before the restoration of sovereignty. Today, Iraqis have a permanent Government chosen in free elections under a democratic Constitution that they wrote and they approved. And the Iraqi people have a courageous leader in Prime Minister Maliki, who has formed a cabinet and laid out a clear agenda for the people of Iraq.

I met the Prime Minister. I met with his team. I was impressed by them. I was impressed by his strength. I was impressed by his character. I was impressed by his determination to succeed. He's laid out an ambitious plan to improve its economy and deliver essential services and to defeat the enemies of a free Iraq. And I told him this: That as he stands up for freedom, the United States of America will stand with him.

There's more work to be done in Iraq. The Iraqi people face deadly enemies who are determined to stop Iraq's new unity Government from succeeding. They can't stand the thought of liberty. Our strategy is clear. Our goals are easy to understand: We will help Iraq's new leaders; we will help the people of Iraq build a country that can govern itself and sustain itself and defend itself as a free nation. Our troops will help the Iraqi people succeed because it's in our national interests. A free Iraq in the heart of the Middle East will make America and the world more secure.

I'm going to make you this promise: I'm not going to allow the sacrifice of 2,527 troops who have died in Iraq to be in vain by pulling out before the job is done.

General Casey is working with the Iraqi Government on a path forward. But we're not going to set an artificial timetable for withdrawal. Setting an artificial timetable

would be a terrible mistake. At a moment when the terrorists have suffered a series of significant blows, setting an artificial timetable would breathe new life into their cause. Setting an artificial timetable would undermine the new Iraqi Government and send a signal to Iraq's enemies that if they wait just a little bit longer, America will just give up. Setting an artificial timetable would undermine the morale of our troops by sending the message that the mission for which you've risked your lives is not worth completing. We're not going to set an artificial timetable to withdraw from Iraq. I will make decisions about troop levels in Iraq based on the advice that matters most, the measured judgment of our military commanders.

I'll make you another pledge: We're going to make sure you have the resources you need to defeat our enemies in Iraq and secure the peace for generations to come. I believe in you, and I believe in all the men and women who are serving in the cause of freedom with such courage and such determination. You're winning this war, and our enemies understand that too.

We get all kinds of evidence when we raid these safe houses, about their concerns. They bemoan the fact that we're keeping the pressure on them. They see the successes we're having in training. They know we're damaging their cause. This moment when the terrorists are suffering from the weight of successive blows is not the time to call retreat. We will stay; we will fight; and we will prevail.

Prevailing in Iraq is going to require more tough fighting; it's going to require more sacrifice. And when the job in Iraq is done, it will be a major victory in the battle against the terrorists. By achieving victory in Iraq, we will deny the terrorists a safe haven from which to plot and plan new attacks on America and other free nations. By achieving victory in Iraq, we will send a signal to our enemies that America's resolve is firm and that our country will not run in the face of thugs and assassins.

By achieving victory in Iraq, we will help Iraqis build a free nation in the heart of a troubled region and inspire those who desire liberty—those democratic reformers from Damascus to Tehran. By achieving victory in

Iraq, we will honor the sacrifice of the brave men and women who have risked their lives and given their lives for a just and noble cause.

Victory in Iraq will not, in itself, end the war on terror. We're engaged in a global struggle against the followers of a murderous ideology that despises freedom and crushes all dissent and has territorial ambitions and pursues totalitarian aims. This enemy attacked us in our homeland on September the 11th, 2001. They're pursuing weapons of mass destruction that would allow them to deliver even more catastrophic destruction to our country and our friends and allies across the world. They're dangerous. And against such enemy there is only one effective response: We will never back down; we will never give in; and we will never accept anything less than complete victory.

We will keep the pressure on them. We will stay on the offense. We'll fight the terrorists in Afghanistan and Iraq and every battlefront in this struggle. Yet in the long run, we will defeat the terrorists and their hateful ideology by spreading the hope of freedom across the world. Our strategy to protect America is based on a clear premise: The security of our Nation depends on the advance of liberty in other nations.

On September the 11th, 2001, we saw that problems originating in a failed and oppressive state 7,000 miles away could bring murder and destruction to our country. And we learned an important lesson: Decades of excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make it safe. So long as the Middle East remains a place where freedom does not flourish, it will remain a place where terrorists foment resentment and threaten American security.

And so we pursue a forward strategy of freedom in the Middle East. We ought to be confident in the pursuit of that strategy because liberty is universal. And by standing with those who desire liberty, we will help extend freedom to millions who have not known it and lay the foundations of peace for generations to come.

These are historic times, and I thank you for putting on the uniform and for volunteering to serve this country during these important times. I have confidence in our coun-

try, and I have faith in our cause. Because I see—I know the character of the men and women who wear our Nation's uniform. And I know the character of the men and women here at Fort Bragg. We see that character in 24 service members from Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force Base who have received the Silver Star for gallantry in combat. We see that character in men and women who have received serious wounds in battle but fought on, exposing themselves to enemy fire to save their comrades and complete their missions.

We see that character in special operations soldiers like Captain Chip Eldridge. In December 2004, Captain Eldridge was deployed at a coalition base near Shkin, Afghanistan, where he got a report that the terrorists were preparing to attack the base with a rocket. When his unit went out to look for them, his Humvee was hit by an antitank mine, and his unit came under a barrage of gunfire. He was pulled out of his vehicle, and he looked down, and he saw that part of his left leg had been blown off. Despite the intense pain, he refused pain killers offered by a field medic so he could stay alert to deal with the enemy. Soon, a team of A-10 Warthogs arrived and took care of the terrorists, and Chip and his men were evacuated.

Eventually, Chip was transported to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, where doctors told him that he would be in recovery for at least a year. He told his doctors he had a change of command in 6 months and that he'd be out of recovery by then. To speed his recovery, he tripled his daily physical therapy regime. He told his physical therapists, "I'm going to need to run, swim, jump out of planes, possibly ride horses; I'm not going to accept anything different." His therapist recalls how angry he was when someone told him he'd never run a sub-7 minute mile again. Chip proved him wrong.

Today, his commanding officer says, "I'd say he's fitter than 90 percent of the people in the unit he commands. In a room with four people, I bet he could beat three of us in a mile run." Chip is here at Fort Bragg; he's jumping out of planes; he's training with his men; and next April, he's heading back to Afghanistan, where he'll once again command a unit in the zone of combat. America is blessed to have brave soldiers like Chip

Eldridge. With men like this leading our forces in the battle, the enemy doesn't have a chance.

Like Chip, some of our service men and women have returned from war with terrible injuries, wounds they will carry with them for the rest of their lives. Others left our shores to defend freedom and did not live to make the journey home. They left loved ones behind who mourn a loss that time can never fully heal. We hold the families of the fallen in our hearts, and we lift them up in our prayers, and America will always honor their sacrifice.

In the past 5 years, the men and women of Fort Bragg have met hardships together, and you have looked out for each other. Last year, more than 6,400 members of the Fort Bragg community served as volunteers, put in more than 725,000 hours of service to your friends and neighbors at this base. You've coached little league teams; you've comforted children who miss moms and dads deployed on missions far from home; and you helped returning soldiers make the adjustments from life in a combat zone to life at home.

As you stand with one another here at Fort Bragg, you need to know, America stands with you. We support you. Last week, at the White House, I met with leaders of military service organizations from across this country. These groups are sending letters to our troops and offering scholarships for the children of our fallen and severely wounded soldiers. And they're providing millions of dollars in assistance to families of service men and women in need.

I met some remarkable people at that meeting. I met a lady named Emily Dieruf—Dieruf—who lost her husband, Nich, in Iraq. Emily Dieruf has dedicated her life to helping our service men and women and their families in difficult times. She travels the country raising funds for a group called USA Cares. And together, they provided more than \$1.4 million in assistance to our military families.

I met a wonderful lady named Mary Harper. Mary has got five children and a son-in-law in the United States Army, all of them in the Army, and all of them have served in Iraq. Mary was concerned about our

troops not receiving mail from home, and so she started something called Operation Shoe Box. Today, she has 500 volunteers working with her, shipping between 500 and 700 care packages a week to our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq and other fronts in the war on terror. People like Mary and Emily represent the heart and soul of our Nation, and they make this country proud.

Across our country, Americans are coming together to help our deployed forces and their families. And we can do more. So on this Fourth of July, I ask all Americans to take a moment and consider what you might do to support the men and women who wear our Nation's uniform. If you're interested in helping, go to a Department of Defense web site called americasupportsyou.mil. That's where you can find a place to volunteer, an opportunity to help. I ask every citizen to consider making a contribution to the men and women who defend us, because every one of us owes our freedom to these courageous Americans.

The men and women who serve here at Fort Bragg are making a difference for America, and you're part of a great history. From the Battle of Trenton to the Battle of Tall 'Afar, brave soldiers have stepped forward to risk their lives for liberty. Two hundred and thirty years after America declared her independence, the spirit of '76 lives on in the courage that you show each day.

You've given our citizens a priceless gift, the opportunity to live in freedom and to pursue their dreams and enjoy lives of purpose and dignity. You've kept America what our Founders meant her to be: A light to the nations, spreading the good news of human freedom to the darkest corners of Earth.

I want to thank you for all you do for our country and for the world. May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:58 a.m. at Iron Mike Plaza. In his remarks, he referred to Col. Mark Tillman, USAF, commander, Presidential Airlift Group; Lt. Gen. John R. Vines, USA, commanding general, XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; and Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq.

Remarks on Immigration Reform in Alexandria, Virginia

July 5, 2006

The President. I just had a really interesting conversation. First of all, this business is owned by two Iranian American brothers. They are small-business owners; they are entrepreneurs; they are employing people. And then I met with the district manager, who works with the two Iranian American brothers, happens to be a Guatemalan American citizen. She is learning business; she is taking on additional responsibility. Then I talked to the store manager, who was a Salvadoran American.

These people remind me that one of the great features of our country is that people are able to come here and realize dreams. One of the problems we have, because our economy is strong, is that small-business owners have trouble finding workers. People come here to work.

And one of the things we've got to do is to make sure that they have a verification plan that will enable them to determine, as they hire new workers, whether or not those workers are here illegally. See, it's against the law to hire somebody who is here illegally. And we intend to enforce that law. Part of a comprehensive immigration plan is to give employers the tools necessary to determine whether or not the workers they're looking for are here illegally in America. And we've got such a plan—Basic Pilot, it's called. It's working.

One of the reasons I came is, I asked the owner of the business, was the plan working. He said, "Yes, it is. It makes it easier for us to verify whether the documents a person gives us are true." I also want—so therefore I want this plan to be expanded. When I first became President, it was only in six States. Now it's across the Nation. But it's a voluntary plan; it ought to be a mandatory plan.

I'm strongly for a comprehensive immigration policy; it's one that enforces the border. And we're doing that by expanding agents and putting new technologies on our border. But part of a comprehensive immigration plan is to make sure we have interior enforcement, that we uphold our laws, and say to employers, "It's against the law for you to

hire somebody who's here illegally; we intend to fine you when we catch you doing it." But we've got to get the employers the tools to make sure that the people who are here, are here legally.

Thirdly, I think there needs to be—I know there needs to be a worker program that says you can come here on a temporary basis and work here legally for jobs Americans aren't doing. If you talk to employers such as these folks, they'll tell you they need workers. And people are willing to do the work that others aren't willing to do, but we want to make sure there's a legal way to do it.

So I look forward to working with Congress for a temporary-worker plan that will have background checks to make sure that people that are coming aren't criminals, that say you can come here for a temporary basis, that you can do work others aren't doing. And that's one way to make sure that employers know they're hiring people who are here legally.

We need to make sure we help people assimilate. I met four people here who assimilated into our country. They speak English; they understand the history of our country; they love the American flag as much as I love the American flag. That's one of the great things about America—we help newcomers assimilate. Here's four folks that are living the American Dream, and I think it helps renew our soul and our spirit to help people assimilate.

And finally, we cannot kick people out who have been here for awhile. And so I look forward to working with Congress on a rational plan as to how to make sure people who have been here, the 11 million or so people who have been here for awhile, are treated with respect and dignity. I'm absolutely opposed to amnesty. Amnesty says, you're automatically a citizen. That would be a mistake to grant amnesty. Amnesty would say to somebody, all I've got to do is wait it out; all I've got to do is get here illegally myself and I'll become a citizen. That would be bad policy.

But I'm also realistic to tell you that we're not going to be able to deport people who have been here, working hard and raising their families. And so I want to work with Congress to come up with a rational way forward.

Again, I want to thank you all for having me. I love being—I cannot tell you how I love being with entrepreneurs and dreamers and doers and people who are running things and managers, and to be with my fellow citizens as we talk about a very important public policy, and that's rational, comprehensive immigration reform.

Thank you all very much. See you back at the White House.

Q. Mr. President, North Korea—do you believe there should be—

The President. See you at the White House. April [April Ryan, American Urban Radio Networks], would you like me to buy you a cup of coffee?

Ms. Ryan. I would love you to.

The President. What would you want in it?

Ms. Ryan. Anything you want to give me.

The President. What would you like in it, cream and sugar?

Ms. Ryan. Sure, sir. [Laughter]

The President. Alright. One more coffee please. I'm coming your way. It's in the spirit of—

Ms. Ryan. Spirit of what?

The President. Spirit of reaching out.

Ms. Ryan. All right. And you got money in your pocket? Do you typically keep money in your pocket?

The President. No, this is—Jared let me have this money. [Laughter] And I'll repay him—I'll repay him. See, the man offered to give me the coffee for free. You can't run a business if you give your coffee away. I understand how commerce works. He offers a product I want; I then pay for that product—I'll handle that, sir, thank you. [Laughter]

Ms. Ryan. Mr. President, thank you so much.

The President. April, anything for you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:02 a.m. in a Dunkin' Donuts/Baskin Robbins store. In his remarks, he referred to Abolhossein Ejtemai and Ali Assayesh, owners, and Reynaldo Ramos, store manager; and Adriana Hernandez, district manager, Dunkin' Brands, Inc. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Mikheil Saakashvili of Georgia and an Exchange With Reporters

July 5, 2006

President Bush. We'll have opening statements and a couple of questions.

First, Mr. President, welcome. I was—reminded the President about what a fantastic visit I had to Georgia. Laura and I will never forget your hospitality; we will never forget the food, for which Georgia is quite famous; we will never forget the fantastic folk dancing we saw. And then I'll never forget our visits and the speech to the Georgian people. It was a fantastic trip.

It was made fantastic because my friend not only was a good host, but he is a man who shares the same values I share. He believes in the universality of freedom. He believes that democracy is the best way to yield the peace. The Georgian Government and the people of Georgia have acted on those beliefs. I want to thank you for your contribution in Iraq, to help the Iraqi people realize the great benefits of democracy. It's hard work, but it's necessary work.

We had a very good discussion about a variety of topics. I assured the President that Georgia is our friend, and we care deeply about the people of Georgia. It's a remarkable experience has taken place. I congratulate the President and his Government on creating an economic climate that fosters growth and opportunity. I love the stories about the entrepreneurial spirit that's beginning to flourish.

And one of the interesting stories that captured my imagination is when the President first came into office and he cleaned out the police forces in order to rid the country of corruption in the law enforcement—understanding full well that the people must trust security in order for a society to flourish.

And so, Mr. President, you've got hard work ahead of you. You've tackled problems with vigor and enthusiasm. But most importantly, you've stayed true to a philosophy that I admire. So welcome back to the Oval Office, and please give your good wife all my very best.

President Saakashvili. I will certainly tell Sandra. And I mean, Mr. President, it was an incredible honor for me to stand next to you in the Freedom Square in Tbilisi. And I felt like it was, you know, after—it was vindication for all those Georgians, including my family members, who perished in gulag, who died fighting for their freedom, their liberty, their independence. And, basically, this was an incredible occasion because I'm also—I've studied diplomacy for many years, and I can tell you, it was brilliant exercise of self-diplomacy, the way you appreciated our culture, our openness, our warmth. And we will certainly never forget it.

Georgia is, indeed, performing. It is a very—I mean, it has strong economic growth. This is a very beautiful country that attracts lots of investment now. We have low tax rates, but we dramatically increased our tax collection, which means that low taxes and less government is a very good thing to have, as you well know.

So basically, we are getting there. And one thing, you know, we discussed with President Bush the upcoming G-8 summit. And, certainly, there are lots of issues that are at stake there, and we believe very strongly in the same values, in the same principles. And we are talking to the President—to the country, which is the—for Georgians, I mean, for generations of Georgians, American freedom are synonymous—they have been synonymous for me all my life, when I lived under Soviets and after that. And it still stays very much that way, because all freedom-loving people today, whenever they have something to share with somebody, come to America. And this is a very strong thing.

And one thing I can tell, Mr. President, your freedom agenda does indeed work. I mean, you can see it in Georgia. We are seeing it in Iraq. And please stay there; please fight there until the end. We will stay with you there, whatever it takes, because your success in Iraq is success for countries like Georgia. It's a success for every individual that loves freedom, every individual that wants security, to live in more secure world for himself, herself, or their children. And whatever it takes to help you—we are not a big country—we are beautiful, small country with lots of attractions—I invited you to

come. I had mountain biking here yesterday, and I invited you to come over and have mountain biking in Georgia.

But one thing is important, that you know we really cherish the same things. And I'm so honored to be here on the Independence Day, and I watched yesterday fireworks—and around the time of your birthday. So happy birthday. I'm honored to be invited now. *[Laughter]* And God bless you, America, Georgia, and the whole world. Thank you very much.

President Bush. Mr. President, thank you. Deb *[Deb Riechmann, Associated Press]*.

North Korea

Q. Mr. President, on North Korea, how is it possible to punish a country that is one of the poorest and most isolated in the world? And secondly, had you been hoping for a stronger response from China?

President Bush. The North Korean Government can join the community of nations and improve its lot by acting in concert with those who—with those of us who believe that she shouldn't possess nuclear weapons, and by those of us who believe that there's a positive way forward for the North Korean Government and her people. In other words, this is a choice they make. Yesterday, as you know, they fired off a series of rockets. The world had—particularly those of us in the six-party talks—had asked for that not to happen. It's a matter of good faith. The Government made a different decision.

And so it's their choice to make. What these firing of the rockets have done is they've isolated themselves further, and that's sad for the people of North Korea. I am deeply concerned about the plight of the people of North Korea. I would hope that the Government would agree to verifiably abandon its weapons programs. I would hope that there would be a better opportunity to—for that Government and its people to move forward. The Chinese will play—have played and will continue to play a very important role in the six-party talks. It's my view that the best way to solve this problem diplomatically is for there to be more than one nation speaking to North Korea, more than America voicing our opinions.

And therefore, the five of us—Russia, South Korea, Japan, China, and the United States—spoke with one voice about the rocket launches, and we will work together to continue to remind the leader of North Korea that there is a better way forward for his people.

Georgia.

President Saakashvili. You know, regarding the—I mean, I'm not intervening off the agenda, but one thing I have to tell you, in Georgia, that I just sent over to President Bush the letter that Georgian freedom fighters sent him 7 years ago, and it never made it to the White House. It was intercepted by KGB, and all the people who wrote it were shot.

I'm sure lots of people out there in Korea are writing similar letters today. And I'm sure that North Korean missiles will never reach the United States, but those letters will, eventually, very soon, because that's a part of freedom agenda that President Bush has and what we strongly believe in.

President Bush. Do you want to call on a Georgia?

President Saakashvili. Please. Wherever.

Georgia/North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. Mr President, Georgia is planning IPP to NATO. What do you think, how fast can Georgia finish this IPP process and get Membership Action Plan? And do you think that Georgia should and will be a NATO member during your Presidency? Thank you, sir.

President Bush. Listen, I believe that NATO would benefit with Georgia being a member of NATO, and I think Georgia would benefit. And there's a way forward through the Membership Action Plan. And we—we'll work with our partners in NATO to see if we can't make the path a little smoother for Georgia. Georgia has got work to do, and the President understands that. But I'm a believer in the expansion of NATO. I think it's in the world's interest that we expand NATO.

Kelly [Kelly O'Donnell, NBC News].

North Korea

Q. Thank you, sir. On the North Korean missiles, what have you learned about their

intentions or their capabilities, and what threat level do you think they still possess given that their intercontinental missile failed?

President Bush. I spoke with Secretary Rumsfeld yesterday. He called me right after the launch, and he said they had preliminary information that they were going to analyze about the trajectory of the larger rocket. The other five rockets that were fired, the scuds, were—their performance was pretty predictable. It's kind of a routine weapon that some of these nations have.

I asked him this morning, again, when I met with him about the information. They're still analyzing, trying to figure out the intention of the North Korean leader as to why he would have fired the rocket and what they were trying to learn from it.

One thing we have learned is that the rocket didn't stay up very long and tumbled into the sea, which doesn't, frankly, diminish my desire to solve this problem. So the first part of your question is, we're still analyzing what the intentions were. We're trying to analyze the data to determine flight path, for example.

I view this as an opportunity to remind the international community that we must work together to continue to work hard to convince the North Korean leader to give up any weapons programs. They've agreed to do that in the past, and we will hold them to account. And I also strongly believe that it is much more effective to have more than one nation dealing with North Korea. It's more effective for them to hear from a group of nations rather than one nation.

And so today the Secretary of State, starting last night, the Secretary of State has been in touch with counterparts. I, of course, will be on the phone as well. We want to send—to continue to send a clear message that there is a better way forward for the leader of North Korea. It's hard to understand his intentions. It's hard to understand why he would not only fire one missile that failed but five others. And so we're talking with our friends and allies on the subject.

Spread of Democracy/Georgia-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President, as you mentioned, you've faced a lot of important challenges in many places like Iran and Iraq, Afghanistan, and North Korea. And at the same time, the whole world recognizes your personal role in promoting democracy and freedom all around. And how do you think, is there any chance that Georgia's aspiration to build free and democratic country may be left off of your agenda?

President Saakashvili. Tricky question.

President Bush. Freedom—I believe freedom is universal. And I believe the spread of liberty is important for peace. And therefore, the freedom agenda will be at the heart of everything I do. The freedom agenda is ingrained in my—it's not only ingrained in my policy; it's ingrained in my soul. I believe it strongly. And I believe the United States has an obligation to work with others to help them secure their liberty.

I understand that elections are only the beginning of the freedom agenda and that there's work needed to be done around the world, including our own country, to continue to build strong institutions and build the organizations necessary for a civil society to develop. Remember, ours was a country that wrote a great Constitution but enslaved people for 100 years. It takes time. And so I understand that, and I want to work with our friends that ask. Georgia is a sovereign government, and when governments say, "Will you help," America must always listen to requests for help, and specifically to Georgia.

One of the signature pieces of policy in my administration has been the Millennium Challenge Account. It's a foreign funding mechanism that recognizes countries that fight corruption, support rule of law, invest in the health and education of their people, and adopt open markets. And one of the most robust Millennium Challenge Account projects is with Georgia. It's a sign—should be a sign to the people of Georgia and people in the neighborhood that the United States respects the decisions this Government has made and wants to work closely with the people of Georgia to help Georgia succeed, to help create the conditions for success.

And so to answer your question, yes, I've got a lot that comes to my desk here, absolutely. I've got a lot to think about. But my friend, the President, wouldn't be sitting here if I didn't have Georgia on my mind. [Laughter]

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:15 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sandra Roelofs, wife of President Saakashvili; and Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea.

**The President's News Conference
With Prime Minister Stephen Harper
of Canada**

July 6, 2006

President Bush. Thank you all. Welcome. It's been my honor to visit with Stephen Harper, the Prime Minister of Canada, in the Oval Office. After this exercise in democracy, I'll be buying him lunch, where we'll continue our discussions. I'm impressed by his leadership style. I appreciate the fact that he doesn't mince words. He tells me what's on his mind, and he does so in a real clear fashion.

We talked about a lot of subjects. We talked about Iran and our joint desire to convince the Iranian regime to give up its nuclear weapons ambitions. We talked about North Korea, and I shared with him our strategy to work with five other—four other nations to convince the North Koreans to adhere to agreements they had already reached with the world.

We talked about the war on terror, and I told the Prime Minister how pleased Americans were that the Canadian Government did the hard work necessary to disrupt terrorist plots. It just goes to show how safe Canada is. When you've got a government that's active and a police force that's capable, people ought to be rest assured that Canada is on top of any plots.

I thanked the Prime Minister and the Canadian people for their involvement in Afghanistan. This is a serious foreign policy decision by the Government, and it's a necessary decision, in my judgment, to help make this world a more peaceful place. It

just goes to show the important role Canada can play in foreign policy. Canada has got a set of values that are extremely important for the world to see.

And I do want to thank the families of those soldiers who are in Afghanistan for supporting their loved ones. Their soldiers are doing fantastic work. I asked prior to your visit here from our military folks how they were doing; they said, great. And they're making the country proud.

I appreciate very much our discussion about Darfur. I believe that Canada and the United States can make a difference in Darfur and should. As you know, our Nation declared the situation in Darfur a genocide. We will work with the international community to bolster the AU forces that are there now. I believe they ought to be blue-helmeted, and I believe there ought to be NATO involvement with a blue-helmeted, AU-augmented force on the ground. The message has got to be clear to the Government of Sudan: We're not going to tolerate this kind of activity.

I speak frequently with my Secretary of State on this issue, Mr. Prime Minister, to make sure that we expedite the arrival of augmented troops to save lives. I talked to Kofi Annan the other night, by the way, about this very subject. And so I appreciate your understanding, and I really appreciate your working on this.

You know, we cooperate closely in our neighborhood. We just renewed the NORAD accord, and I want to thank you for that. I remember going out—one of the hurricanes was about to hit us here, and I can remember talking to and having dinner with a Canadian general there, and it was a—it just reminded me of how close that our relations need to be.

We talked about trade. We have a lot of trade with Canada. It's in this Nation's interest to trade with Canada. It's in, I think, the Canadian interest to trade with the United States. I'll let the Prime Minister speak to that. But it's important when you have trade to have goods and services and people flow as smoothly as possible between our two countries.

We've had some disputes in the past, trade disputes. That's what you expect when you

have a lot of trade. And probably the most nettlesome trade dispute was softwood lumber. And I appreciate the Prime Minister's leadership in helping us resolve this issue. It's a tough issue. It was a tough issue for the Canadian Government; it's a tough issue for us. Nevertheless, the fact that we were able to reach an accord just goes to show how trading partners can be active in trade and be willing—and solve problems. I think this is a really important solution, and I want to thank you for that.

Needless to say, the Prime Minister expressed deep concerns about the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative. The last time I was with him, he expressed concerns. He basically was a little impatient, if I might clarify your—it seemed like you were impatient, at least—[laughter]—and straightforward. "Look," he said, "I understand there's a law on the books; show us what's going to happen." And I understand the concerns. If you have a relationship like we have, where there's a lot of activity and a lot of people moving across the border, it makes sense for the Prime Minister of Canada to say, "Look, we just want to know what the rules are to determine whether or not it is compatible with our relationship."

And so I assured him that my view is—simple and easy to understand is the operative words. And we will continue our discussions about this initiative, particularly since the Secretary of Homeland Security, Chertoff—who is sitting right over there, by the way—will be joining us for lunch. Unless you don't want me to invite him. [Laughter]

We talked about—well, we talked about a lot of subjects, and that's what you'd expect friends to do.

Mr. Prime Minister, the floor is yours. I'm proud you're here, and thanks for coming.

Prime Minister Harper. Well, thank you very much, Mr. President, for the invitation and for the kind words. And thank you for doing something I never thought I'd see, which is have the Canadian media stand when I entered the room. But we certainly enjoy that.

[At this point, Prime Minister Harper spoke in French, and no translation was provided.]

Prime Minister Harper. —your hospitality. The United States and Canada have a strong relationship, strong and firm relationship based on the largest commerce and social interaction in the history of any two countries of the world, and we were able to discuss a wide range of bilateral and international matters where we, more often than not, share common values and common objectives.

We discussed many topics of interest to our respective countries and citizens, in particular, as the President mentioned, the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative. The President and I agreed that the implementation of the provisions of the WHTI must not unduly hinder cross-border travel or tourism or trade. And to that end, we've tasked our officials to agree on common standards for securing alternate documents and, preferably, as soon as possible.

We discussed the critical role Canada, in particular our oil sands, can play in providing energy security. The President and I have agreed to task our officials to provide a more forward-looking approach focused on the environment, climate change, air quality, and energy issues in which our Governments can cooperate. We raised the issue of how regulatory cooperation could increase productivity, while helping to protect our health, safety, and environment.

We also expressed, as the President just did, our mutual satisfaction on the significant progress made on the longstanding softwood lumber dispute. Both countries have now initialed the legal text; that legal text faithfully reproduces and documents the agreements reached between our Governments and various premiers on April the 27th, and I now urge all relevant parties to move forward with its implementation.

The President and I also discussed a number of important international issues, in particular our role in Afghanistan. We have 2,300 men and women on the ground as part of the Canadian forces. They're playing an important role in security and development in order to protect our national interest, rebuild Afghanistan, and ensure it never becomes again a safe haven for terrorists.

We also discussed recent developments in Iran, and we expressed our mutual concern

about North Korea's latest provocative acts. We also discussed the upcoming G-8 meeting in Russia, where issues like energy security, infectious diseases, education, and innovation will be on the agenda. And finally, we did touch briefly on the recent Mexican election. Canada has full confidence in Mexico's institutions and processes, and I look forward very much to working with the next President of Mexico.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

Keil [Richard Keil, Bloomberg News].

North Korea

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Do you want the United Nations to impose sanctions on North Korea? And how will you go about persuading the Russians and the Chinese to back those moves if you make them? And in addition to that, sir, what kind of threat do you think North Korea poses to world peace right now?

President Bush. Nontransparent societies run by Governments that aren't selected by the people are—very difficult to tell what's going on. That's part of the problem. We're dealing with a person who was asked not to fire a rocket by the Chinese, the South Koreans, the United States, the Japanese, and the Russians. And he fired seven of them—which then caused the Secretary of State and myself to get on the phone with our partners and reminded them that—of the importance of speaking with one voice.

It's to—saying to Kim Jong Il, there is a better way forward for you than isolating yourself from the rest of the world; that there is a opportunity for you to stick to some of your agreements, and that is to verifiably disarm; and that there will be a better life than being isolated, and most importantly, a better life for your people than isolation will bring.

And so I was on the phone this morning with Hu Jintao and President Putin, and last night I talked to Prime Minister Koizumi and President Roh. And my message was that we want to solve this problem diplomatically, and the best way to solve the problem diplomatically is for all of us to be working in concert and to send one message, and that is—to Kim Jong Il—that we expect you to adhere to international norms, and we expect you to keep your word.

One way to send a message is through the United Nations. And the Japanese laid down a resolution which we support. But we're working with our partners to make sure we speak with one voice. Diplomacy takes awhile, particularly when you're dealing with a variety of partners. And so we're spending time diplomatically making sure that voice is unified.

I was pleased from the responses I got from the leaders. They, like me, were—are concerned, concerned about a person who doesn't seem to really care about what others say. And so we're working it, working it hard. And it's—and by the way, an effective policy is one which is not just the United States trying to solve problems. So I spent time talking to the Canadian Prime Minister about it. I mean, Canada is a—should be and must be an active participant in helping deal with problems.

He brought up Haiti, for example, in the Oval Office. Canada has made a significant contribution to stability in Haiti in the past. And it's an important—my only point is, is that we will continue to work with others to deal with problems that crop up.

Q. How much of a threat to the world—

President Bush. Well, you know, Dick, I think that—let's put it this way—he's going to pose less of a threat the more isolated he becomes and the more we work together. And as I mentioned to you, it's hard to tell. This is a society in which there's very little freedom, including freedom of the press. There's not a lot of light shining in there.

And so we take his statements very seriously. He's kind of declared himself to be a nuclear power. We obviously watch very carefully his testings. We're trying to make sure, by the way, that the missile that he fired wasn't headed for Canada. We don't know for a fact where it was headed. But, for example, one thing that Stephen and I talked about is he could be seemingly firing a missile at the United States, say, at—I don't know, this is all speculation—but could be headed toward the Northwest of our country. And it wouldn't take much for it to get off course and end somewhere where he may not have intended.

My only point is, is that we will work very closely on these matters together. It's in our

interests that we send a clear message to the leader of North Korea.

Canada-U.S. Border

Q. Christian St. Pierre, Radio Canada. Happy birthday, sir.

President Bush. It's amazing, the first birthday greeting I got from the press came from the Canadian press. [Laughter] Thank you. I am grateful. You're not 60 years old, are you? [Laughter] Well, let me just say this—it's a lot younger than you think.

Q. President Bush—

President Bush. Sure.

Q. My question is about the security at the border. On the passport issue, you seem very open, but there is a deadline of 2008.

President Bush. Yes.

Q. Is there any chance of getting a—of dealing? And, Mr. Harper, can you comment in French and English, please?

President Bush. Thank you. We are responding to congressional law. And I—let me reinterpret your—is your question, is there flexibility in the law, basically? Yes, I think that if Congress decides there needs to be flexibility, there will flexibility. Interestingly enough, the Senate passed—made its intention clear to extend deadlines. That hasn't happened in the House yet. And so we are operating in the executive branch under the idea that nothing will change, and therefore, we need to get to the Canadian Government as quickly as possible our definition of what a reasonable policy is. If Congress decides to be flexible, we obviously will be flexible.

But the reason we're dealing with this issue is because the legislative branch put this into law, put the need to have these kind of documents into law. And as I told Chertoff, who is responsible for implementing the law, that I would like this—to the extent the law allows, for there to be a lot of flexibility and simplicity.

As the Governor of Texas, I'm used to a border situation where hundreds of thousands of people crossed every day. See, we—on our southern border, there are a lot of Mexican citizens who come into the United States and work on a daily basis and then go back home. It happens a lot. And therefore, I fully understand the need for there to be simplicity in the documentation. It

needs to be easy for somebody who is known and a person that is—makes a living on the other side of the border. There's—a lot of kids go to college in, like, El Paso, Texas, and they're living in Mexico, so they've got to go back and forth on a regular basis. So I'm familiar with this issue a lot, and I really do emphasize the need for us to be mindful of what a onerous program could mean to good relations as well as facilitation of trade.

I can remember Stephen's concerns about the effect of this initiative might have on conventions, for example, in Canada. He brought up today an interesting example of Little League teams playing baseball in Manitoba. And so, in other words, there's a lot of just daily commerce that we've got to be mindful about—not just trade but the movement of people. And we are, we are.

And so to answer your question, if the Congress provides flexibility, of course we will work with the Canadian Government to extend deadlines. If the Congress says, "No, this is what our intent is," we will work with the Canadian Government to make the law work.

[Prime Minister Harper spoke in French, and no translation was provided.]

Prime Minister Harper. We're on two tracks here. We've indicated we want to cooperate. We understand this is a congressional law the administration has to put into place. We're prepared to cooperate to make it work as smoothly and effectively as possible. We need more information, and we've been pressing for that for some time, and we'll continue to do so.

At the same time, our other track is obviously to encourage some reexamination of the law. The Senate has recently passed an amendment that would delay this process by a year and a half. We have some indications from some quarters of the House of Representatives, some will there to consider the same thing.

As I say, we—and I just want to emphasize—we in Canada share the United States' security concerns and objectives. I think as you all know, recently with events in Toronto, it's been brought home to all of us that we face exactly the same kind of security threats and are defending exactly the same kinds of

values. And I would hate to see a law go into place that has the effect of not just limiting and endangering trade or tourism but endangering all those thousands of social interactions that occur across our border every day and are the reason why Canada and the United States have the strongest relationship of any two countries, not just on the planet but in the history of mankind.

And I would just urge the Congress to think carefully, that if the fight for security ends up meaning that the United States becomes more closed to its friends, then the terrorists have won. And I don't think either of us want that. So we're prepared to cooperate and also urge the Congress to apply some flexibility in reaching their objectives of security.

President Bush. Thank you.
Jim Axelrod [CBS News].

North Korea/Foreign Policy

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Kim Jong Il has been described as quirky, as odd. A member of your administration yesterday compared him to an unloved child looking for attention. And I'm wondering if you agree with that assessment. Does he pose—

President Bush. Who was that person? [Laughter]

Q. Does he pose—come to the booth, sir, I'll tell you who it was. [Laughter] Does he pose any particular unique problems to deal with? And do you feel that he's looking, for instance, at what's been offered to the Iranians by the world community in terms of incentives and saying, "I'd like a little of that for myself?"

President Bush. It's hard for me to tell you what's on his mind. He lives in a very closed society. It's unlike our societies where we have press conferences and people are entitled to ask questions, and there's all kinds of discussions out of administrations and people saying this, saying that, and the other. This is a very closed society.

We do know there's a lot of concentration camps. We do know that people are starving. As a matter of fact, our Nation has tried to help feed the hungry. But what we don't know is his intentions, and so I think we've got to plan for the worst and hope for the best. And planning for the worst means to

make sure that we continue to work with friends and allies, as well as those who've agreed to be a part of the six-party talks, to continue to send a unified message.

We've also got a very strong Proliferation Security Initiative, because one of the threats that can emanate from a closed society, particularly one that claims to have nuclear weapons, is proliferation. One of the real dangers we face is weapons of mass destruction in the hands of people who would like to continue to hurt us—hurt the United States or hurt Canada, hurt anybody who has the courage to stand up and embrace freedom, see? That's the big threat.

And so we don't know, Jim, about his intentions, but we take—we're planning. And so one of the things we've done—and I thank Canada's contribution—is for there to be a very strong initiative to prevent proliferation, through what we call the Proliferation Security Initiative. And it's an important initiative. It's a way to say, we're not going to allow you to threaten us; we're not going to allow you to—the rocket—as I say, I'm not exactly sure what the azimuth was of the rocket. We've got our people still analyzing that. But, for example, we didn't—we don't know what was on the rocket. We don't know where the rocket was headed. It would have been helpful, of course, had he said, "Here's what we're going to do; here's our intentions; here's what—we want to work with you; we want to explain it." Who knows—maybe send a satellite—who knows what his intention was.

But that's not the way he decided to deal with it. He just decided to say—to start firing, and he fired seven of them. And we take this seriously. We take—and we all should take threats seriously. That's one of the lessons of September the 11th, is that what takes place in other parts of the world can come home to hurt the American people. See, a failed government in Afghanistan enabled plotters and planners to train and then come and kill 3,000 of our citizens. And so it used to be that's it's okay if something were happening from afar, oceans could protect us. I presume that's how some in Canada used to feel. The lesson of September the 11th is, is that we're vulnerable, and therefore, we've got to deal with each threat.

I've assured the American people and assured our friends and allies, we want to deal with threats diplomatically. The best way to deal with threats diplomatically is to encourage others to be a part of the process. And that's what we're doing. That's why we've got the six-party talks.

And one of the keys in the six-party talks is for all the nations to send clear messages to Kim Jong Il. That's why I was on the phone this morning, saying as clearly as I could to our fellow partners, four other leaders, to say, let's send a common message that you won't be rewarded for ignoring the world and that you'll be isolated if you continue to do this, and yet, there's a way forward.

See, I care deeply about the people in North Korea. I truly do. It breaks my heart to know that young children are literally starving to death. And I wish—I just wish at some point in time there was an openness in that society where we could help save lives. I'm also realistic enough to realize what weapons of mass destruction could mean in the world in which we live.

And so we're working this issue hard. We're working the Iranian issue hard. Steve and I talked about a strategy going into the G-8 session. I talked to President Putin this morning about making sure that not only do we send messages to the North Koreans but that our strategy will work with Iran.

And it's just really important for the American President to see the world the way it is, not the way we would hope it would be, and to deal with threats, and to do so in a way that will achieve results. And it takes a while. I mean, these threats didn't arise overnight, and these problems won't be solved overnight. But we've got strategies in place to deal with them.

And one of the reasons why it's important to have Steve here is so we can talk about how we can work together to deal with it. And they're not just threats to our security that normal people think of. HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa is a threat to our security in the long run. That's why I'm proud to report the United States took the lead on setting up the Global Fund, as well as bilateral programs to help save people's lives. I think it's in our interests. I also happen to

believe in the admonition, “To whom much is given, much is required.”

And so, we’ve got a robust foreign policy on a lot of fronts, and I intend to keep it that way. And I’m confident that what we’re doing is going to make this world a better place. And I’m proud to have allies like Steve who understand the stakes of the 21st century.

Birthday Present for the President

Q. Mr. President, Mr. Prime Minister, before I ask you a question, I’m just curious what you think of that belt buckle the Prime Minister gave you as a birthday gift, and are you wearing it?

President Bush. I hadn’t seen it yet. [Laughter] Oh, Lee, you gave it away. [Laughter]

North Korea/Missile Defense System

Q. Mr. President, on a serious note, in light of the North Korean missile test and the fact that North Korea could launch another series of missiles at any minute, did you ask Canada to reconsider joining in the Ballistic Missile Defense Shield?

And, Prime Minister, do you still think it’s wrong and not in Canada’s interest to join the BMD? And if—when you’re responding, could you do it in French and English, please?

President Bush. Anyway, thanks for the belt buckle in advance. [Laughter]

Prime Minister Harper. No problem at all.

President Bush. Looking forward to getting it.

Prime Minister Harper. Figure if you’re going to be 60, you should get something.

President Bush. That’s right. Just hope the belt fits. [Laughter]

No, I didn’t bring it up, because I figured if he was interested, he would tell me. I did explain to him, however, that we will continue to build a robust system, because I think it’s in—I know it’s in our interest to make sure that we’re never in a position where somebody can blackmail us.

So we’ll continue to invest and spend. And since this issue first came up, we’ve made a lot of progress on how to—towards having

an effective system. And it’s in our interest that we continue to work along these lines.

But, no, my attitude was—this is a—this was a particularly difficult political issue inside Canada, and my relationship is such that if Stephen thought it was of importance, he would have told me what’s on his mind. Now, maybe he’s going to bring it up over lunch, but he didn’t bring it up earlier.

Prime Minister Harper. Let me just begin by saying—

President Bush. Interesting question, though.

Prime Minister Harper. Let me just begin by saying that—first of all, the question was asked earlier, I think, is North Korea a threat. I don’t think the issue is whether North Korea is a threat. North Korea clearly wants to be a threat. And I think—I just want to repeat what the President has said. Given that that’s a society of the kind of nature it is, I think this should concern us immensely, and the fact that it is prepared to arm itself and prepared to threaten to use such armaments—I think it is something that we should be gravely concerned about, as was said earlier.

Missiles that are fired in the direction of the United States constitute a threat to Canada. That’s one of the reasons why our Government renewed, on a permanent basis, the NORAD treaty. Through NORAD we have a special relationship on air defense and we share information on these kind of matters. I think as you know, to answer your specific question, the Government of Canada is not prepared to open a missile defense issue at this time, but I will say that I think it should be obvious, when we look at this kind of threat, why the United States and others would want to have a modern and flexible defense system against this kind of threat. So I think that’s something, at least, our Government fully understands.

[Prime Minister Harper spoke in French, and no translation was provided.]

President Bush. Welcome. Thank you for your birthday greetings.

President’s Birthday

Q. Mr. President, happy birthday.

President Bush. Thank you very much. Yes.

Q. It's also my birthday.

President Bush. Today's your birthday, too?

Q. Yes, sir.

President Bush. It is? Come on up. Let's have a birthday picture. Come up, come up, come up. [Laughter] Come on. Get up here. Anybody else have their birthday today? [Laughter] It's your birthday? Yes, sure. It is your birthday? Come on. [Laughter] It's amazing, how everybody's birthday is today.

[All present sang *Happy Birthday to the President and others celebrating birthdays.*]

President Bush. Dear Richard—he just told me he's 30 years old. [Laughter] Happy birthday. Happy birthday.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:55 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Secretary-General Kofi Annan of the United Nations; Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea; President Hu Jintao of China; President Vladimir Putin of Russia; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and President Roh Moo-hyun of South Korea.

Remarks Following a Meeting With United States Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad

July 6, 2006

The President. It's been my pleasure to sit here and talk to our Ambassador from Iraq. I want—first, Zal, I thank you for your service. I really appreciate your family supporting you on this very important mission. I know the Secretary of State and the National Security Adviser join me in saying, it gives us great comfort to know that we've got a man of your caliber there. It's a hard job. And Zal has earned the confidence of the new Iraqi Government, and I was able to see that firsthand in how the Prime Minister and other members of his administration related to him.

He brought back a report that is realistic. On the one hand, he said they've got a good Government—goal-oriented people who are working to achieve certain objectives. And I

know that you've been impressed by Prime Minister Maliki's determination to succeed and his willingness to lay out a commonsense agenda and then hold people to account.

Zal also said it's still a dangerous place because there are people there that will do anything to stop the progress of this new Government. And you have to ask yourself, who's afraid of democracy? I mean, why would people be afraid of a peaceful civil society? And the answer is, people who want to not only harm Iraqis but want to harm us.

And I've assured Zal that—to assure the Iraqi people that when we give our word, we'll keep our word. And we intend to work closely with the Government and to help defend the people until this Government is more capable of defending itself.

And he talked about police training. There's more work to be done in training the police. And we talked about the training of the Army, and it's gone quite well. Zal is concerned about foreign influences in the country, as am I.

I do appreciate your briefing on the Prime Minister's recent trip in the neighborhood, which looked like a very successful trip. We, of course, are concerned that some in the neighborhood may want to derail the progress of a free Iraq. And that is troubling and something that we'll work on.

But, Mr. Ambassador, you represent our country with a lot of class and dignity. And so, thank you. You may want to say a few comments.

Ambassador Khalilzad. Thank you, Mr. President. I came today to also wish the President a happy birthday. Happy birthday, Mr. President. And it's an honor to serve the United States in Iraq. Under your leadership, we're working very hard to make sure Iraq succeeds because Iraq is the defining challenge of our time. And what happens in Iraq will shape the future of the Middle East, and the future of the Middle East will shape the future of the world.

So it's an honor to see you again. And happy birthday, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you, sir. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:12 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks,

he referred to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.

Remarks Following a Dinner With Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago and Business Leaders in Chicago, Illinois

July 6, 2006

Laura said, “What do you want for your birthday?” I said, “I want to have dinner in Chicago with the mayor.” [*Laughter*] Thank you all for joining us. We’ve had a wonderful discussion. Chicago is a fabulous town, Mayor. And you’re awfully kind to host us here.

Somebody said, “Well, what’s your birthday wish?” I’ve got a lot of birthday wishes. I hope our troops are safe. I hope Roger Ebert does well. That’s a birthday wish. I know a lot of people here in Chicago are praying for him. It’s been a heck of a birthday party tonight, and I appreciate you all joining me, and looking forward to having my cake.

Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:21 p.m. in the Chicago Firehouse Restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to Chicago Sun-Times film critic Roger Ebert who had emergency surgery on July 2. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President’s News Conference in Chicago

July 7, 2006

The President. Please be seated. Thank you. It’s nice to be here in Chicago. Mr. Mayor, I thought you might have had enough of me last night. [*Laughter*] Thanks for the birthday party. I really enjoyed our dinner and enjoyed our conversation. Jesse, thanks for being here as well. It’s awfully kind of you to come.

I do want to thank the trustees of this beautiful museum for opening up your facility for a press conference. I hope it doesn’t ruin the atmosphere of the museum. I will try to make sure it doesn’t. I’m looking forward to a tour of this museum after the press conference.

I’m sure you’re wondering why I would have a press conference in Chicago. It’s a fabulous city, plus I’d like to see what it’s like to have a major press conference outside of Washington. It might do me some good. The truth of the matter is, it might do the White House press corps some good as well. So I welcome the Chicago reporters here. Thank you for coming.

I had a fine dinner last night at the Chicago Firehouse and a good breakfast today at Lou Mitchell’s. It’s really interesting sites here in Chicago, and it’s a lot of fun going to them. And I want to thank the gracious hospitality of the restaurateurs and the people of Chicago for—by welcoming me.

I had some conversations with some of the business leaders last night and for breakfast, and there’s kind of an interesting sense of optimism here in this part of the world, and the statistics bear that out. In the Chicago area, businesses have added over more than 74,000 new jobs over the past 2 years. And that’s positive; it’s a good sign. The unemployment rate in this area is 4.3 percent—that’s below the national average. People are working. People are able to find jobs. Illinois created more jobs than any other State in the month of April. So the entrepreneurial spirit is strong here.

One of the things I detected from the business leaders, that there’s a sense of optimism which encourages people to invest. And when you invest, you create the conditions for job growth. Major companies have announced plans to add even more jobs.

This morning we got some good news—the Nation added 121,000 new jobs for the month of June. That’s over 5.4 million jobs since August of 2003; that’s 34 months of job increases. In the first quarter, our economy grew at 5.6 percent. Productivity is high. People are better off. Things are working. And so the fundamental question we face in Washington is, how do we keep economic vitality alive? What do we do? What are the policies necessary to keep this growth strong?

And one policy is to keep taxes low. If you raise taxes, you take money out of the pockets of small businesses and entrepreneurs, which makes it harder to increase employment. One of the reasons I’m here at this museum is because one way to make sure we continue

to grow our economy is to have a workforce that's capable of filling the jobs of the 21st century.

One of the subjects the mayor and I talked about last night was the No Child Left Behind Act and what the city of Chicago is doing to hold people to account and have high standards and to offer different choices to parents here in Chicago, through charter schools, for example. The mayor said something interesting—he said, “Reading scores are up.” That’s a good sign. It means people are measuring, and teachers are teaching. And when you have the basics—the basic foundation for good education laid, then you can focus on math and science.

So the truth of the matter is, we have to make sure our kids have got the math and science skills to fill the jobs of the 21st century. We live in a global economy in an interconnected world, and if we can’t provide the employees for the jobs of the 21st century, they’re going to go somewhere else. So education is crucial to make sure we’re a competitive and vibrant nation.

Job training is really important. The Labor Department, working with the local folks here, have set up one-stop centers in Chicago to help connect workers with employers. You’ve got a good community college system here. Community colleges are really important to make sure that workers are given the skills to fill the jobs which actually exist. And the Lake Land Community College system is a strong program. There’s Federal help, and there’s State help, and there’s local involvement, all aimed at making sure people have got the capacity to have the—to fill the jobs. I mean, you have got a growing economy like this; there’s concern by employers whether or not they’re going to be able to find people to do the work. And education is the gateway to make sure that we remain a competitive economy.

I also believe strongly that we’ve got to open up markets to goods produced here in Illinois, goods and services. In other words, one way to make sure this economy of ours grows is to reject protectionism and be confident in our capacity to trade. I’m getting ready to go to the G-8, and one of the topics there is going to be the Doha round of the WTO, which basically—the commitment is

that a world that trades freely is a world in which people are going to be able to find work here at home, and it means we have better capacity to be able to help lift nations out of poverty.

We talked last night about immigration. I found it interesting that the people that were there with the mayor and me, employers and chamber of commerce-type people, put immigration as one of the issues they want to talk about. I told them this; I said, “First of all, I’ll always remember that immigrants have helped shape the character of this Nation.” We are a land of immigrants. I also reminded them that the system we got today isn’t working, and it needs to be changed and reformed.

We’re a nation of law, and we can be a compassionate nation when it comes to immigration, and the two don’t conflict. So I’ve talked about a comprehensive immigration plan. Look, people in this country expect us to secure the border, and we will. And the way you do that is, you add more manpower and you put new technologies on the border to keep people from sneaking across.

But in order to enforce this border, we’ve got to have a rational way that recognizes there are people sneaking across to do work Americans aren’t doing. They’re doing jobs Americans are not filling. And my attitude is this: When you find a willing worker and a willing employer, there ought to be a legal way to let somebody come here to work on a temporary basis. It takes pressure off the border. When you got people sneaking across to do work, it puts pressure on the border. If somebody can come in on a legal way, it’s going to make it easier for our Border Patrol agents to do their job.

Secondly, one of the serious issues we have, and one of the issues that the—some of the leaders brought up yesterday was—the guy said, “We really shouldn’t be in a position to be document verifiers.” And when you make something illegal that people want, it’s amazing what happens—kind of a whole industry of smugglers and innkeepers and document forgers that sprung up. And so people show up and say, “I want to work.” The guy says, “Show me your document,” and they don’t know whether it’s real or not.

And we got a Basic Pilot program to help people verify whether documents are real.

But one way to do it is, if you have a temporary-worker program, say, here's a tamper-proof card that will enable our employers to be able to verify whether someone is here legally to do work on a temporary basis and enable the Government to hold people to account for hiring illegal workers. See, it's against the law to hire somebody who is here illegally, and the American people expect us to enforce the law, and we will. But the system needs to be reformed.

I told the workers last night that there are about 11 million people here, more or less, who have been here for awhile, that are building families, and they're good workers. And they said, "What are you going to do about it?" And I said, well, there's two extremes on this issue. One extreme is, kick them out, deport everybody. That's not going to work. It may sound like a kind of an interesting sound bite, kind of a nice throwaway line, but it's not going to work. It's impractical.

The other option is to say, well, you're an automatic citizen. That's called amnesty. That won't work. And the reason that won't work is, if you grant 8 or 9 million people who are here illegally automatic citizenship, it means another 8 or 9 million coming.

The best way to deal with this problem, in my judgment, is to say, look, you're here illegally; there's got to be a consequence. The consequence could be a penalty, a fine. It could be proof that you're not a criminal. In other words, there's got to be ways to say—make restitution for society for breaking the law; but say to the person, you can get in the citizenship line, but at the back of the line, not at the beginning. See, there are people in line who want to become a citizen of the United States. It doesn't make sense to penalize those who are here legally, playing by the rules, to let people who have been here illegally get ahead of them.

This is a comprehensive plan. Look, the House has passed a bill; the Senate has passed a bill. And we're working in Washington to reconcile the differences. It's hard work. It's not an easy assignment. But I'm confident if we all keep working on it, we can get a comprehensive bill done, which will

be good for the country and send the message that we're a land of different folks from different religions and different backgrounds, all united under the great American ideal.

I spend a lot of time worrying about the war on terror. I think about it every single day. My biggest job, frankly, is to protect the American people. And this is a dangerous world, and there are people out there lurking who are trying to figure out ways to hurt us. I know some dismiss that as empty rhetoric; I'm just telling you, it's the truth. And therefore, we're doing a lot of stuff in Washington. We're reforming our intelligence services to be able to react better. The FBI is now focusing on counterterrorist activities. The CIA is developing more human intelligence, which will make it easier to be able to do our duty.

We're also on the offense against the terrorists. We'll keep the pressure on them. We'll bring them to justice before they hurt our people.

The central front in the war on terror is Iraq. And I know Iraq is on the minds of a lot of people here in Chicago. It's hard work. It's hard work because we face an enemy that will kill innocent people in order to achieve an objective, and their objective is to drive us out of Iraq so they can have safe haven from which to launch attacks against modern Muslim nations, so they can spread their ideology of hate. They want us to—they believe capitalist societies and democracies are inherently weak. They do not believe that we've got the capacity to do the hard work necessary to help the Iraqis succeed.

And they're mistaken; they're just wrong. Success in Iraq is vital for the security of the United States, and success in Iraq is vital for long-term peace. And so therefore, we'll complete the mission.

And we've got good partners. Zai Khalilzad came in the other day, who is our Ambassador to Iraq. And he, like me, has confidence in Prime Minister Maliki. He's a guy who can set goals and follow through on those goals. He understands what needs to be done in order to succeed. And he represents the will of 12 million people who went to the polls. That's a pretty interesting

sign that the Iraqi people want to live in freedom.

There's been a lot of sacrifice in the war on terror. People have lost life. We've lost, obviously, a lot of lives here on the homeland, and we've lost lives overseas. I think of Corporal Ryan Cummings, from right here in the Chicago area. He was an honor student at Hoffman Estates High School. He volunteered for the United States Marine Corps. He served two tours of duty in Iraq, and then he volunteered for a third. Ryan understood the stakes. He understood that we must win. And so he said, "I'd like to go back." And he was killed in Anbar Province last month.

Our prayers go out to Ryan's family. I marvel at the strength of his mother, when she said, "He wanted to be doing something that made a difference; he was doing what he wanted to do."

I have confidence in the capacity of liberty to transform hostile regions to peaceful regions. And I have confidence in our capacity to win the war on terror because of people like Ryan Cummings are willing to step up and serve this Nation.

There's a lot of issues that I'm sure we'll be talking about today—North Korea and Iran, hopefully the Middle East, maybe some local issues here in Chicago. It's my honor to be here. Thank you for coming. And now I'll start answering some questions, starting with one of the senior members of the press corps—are you over 60?

North Korea/Missile Testing

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. You look like you're about 65. Anyway, go ahead. [Laughter]

Q. Harsh. Mr. President, Japan has dropped the threat of sanctions from its proposed Security Council resolution about North Korea. Why was that necessary? And how do you punish or penalize a country that's already among the poorest and most isolated in the world?

The President. I think that the purpose of the U.N. Security Council resolution is to send a clear message to the leader of North Korea that the world condemns that which he did. Part of our strategy, as you know, has been to have others at the table, is to say as clearly as possible to the North Korean,

"Get rid of your weapons, and there's a better way forward." In other words, there's a choice for him to make. He can verifiably get rid of his weapons programs and stop testing rockets, and there's a way forward for him to help his people.

I believe it's best to make that choice clear to him with more than one voice, and that's why we have the six-party talks. And now that he has defied China and Japan and South Korea and Russia and the United States—all of us said, don't fire that rocket. He not only fired one; he fired seven. Now that he made that defiance, it's best for all of us to go to the U.N. Security Council and say loud and clear, here are some red lines. And that's what we're in the process of doing.

The problem with diplomacy, it takes a while to get something done. If you're acting alone, you can move quickly. When you're rallying world opinion and trying to come up with the right language at the United Nations to send a clear signal, it takes a while.

And so yesterday I was on the phone with—I think I mentioned this to the press conference yesterday—to Hu Jintao and Vladimir Putin; the day before to President Roh and Prime Minister Koizumi. And Condi, by the way, was making the same calls out there to her counterparts, all aiming at saying, "It's your choice, Kim Jong Il; you've got the choice to make."

So we'll see what happens at the U.N. Security Council. I talked to Condi this morning first thing, in anticipation of this question, and she feels good about the progress that can be made there.

North Korea/Six-Party Negotiations

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Well, what matters most of all is for Kim Jong Il to see the world speak with one voice. That's the purpose, really.

Here's the problem, it seems like to me, that there have been agreements with North Korea in the past. There's the '94 agreement. I think you were around here then, Sanger [David Sanger, New York Times]. And then it turns out he didn't live up to the agreement. He said—in September of '05, there

was a joint declaration that talked about lasting peace, and we all signed on to a document that said we'll denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. That's a noble and important goal. This was signed by the five of us plus North Korea. He had also talked about the rocket moratorium. He assured Koizumi in '04, Prime Minister Koizumi, that he would adhere to that. And you just got to wonder whether the man's word means anything. And one way to make sure it does mean something is for nations other than the United States to say the same thing, to speak loud and clear. And that's what you're seeing evolve.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea

Q. Thank you, sir. Some experts say North Korea may be launching missiles to attract more concessions. Are you prepared to offer any more concessions beyond that already offered in the six-party format? And have you ruled out the possible military option in responding to them?

The President. As you know, we want to solve all problems diplomatically. That's our first choice.

What was the first part of your question? This is what happens when you're 60—

Q. —are they trying to exchange—[inaudible].

The President. Look, I don't know what the man's intentions are. I don't know what they are. It's an interesting question: Is he trying to force us to do something by defying the world? If he wants a way forward, it's clear. If he wants to have good relations with the world, he's got to verifiably get rid of his weapons programs like he agreed to do in 1994, stop testing missiles, and there is a way forward. Part of the discussions in September were, here's a way forward. Here's a way for—he's worried about energy, and our partners at the table said, well, here's an energy proposal for you to consider. And so the choice is his to make.

And I made it very clear to our partners that it seems like to me, that the message ought to be one that said, you shouldn't be rewarded for violating that which you've said you're going to do and kind of ignoring what the world has said. And it's just—whether

it be the Iranian issue or the North Korean issue, there is a way forward for these leaders that will lead to a better life for their people and acceptance into the international community. And one of the things we've done in the United States is to work with the coalition to send that message. It's a clear message. He knows what his options are.

Kelly [Kelly O'Donnell, NBC News]. A couple—then we'll start working the local thing. Warm up.

Hamdan v. Rumsfeld

Q. Hello, Mr. President.

The President. Yes.

Q. I'd like to ask you to speak on the broad implications of that recent Supreme Court case—not the specifics of the case. But the Justices said that you overreached your authority, and your critics have been saying that too. Given your support and respect for the Court, are you willing to rethink how you use your Presidential authority?

The President. I am willing to abide by the ruling of the Supreme Court. And the Supreme Court said that in this particular case, when it comes to dealing with illegal combatants who were picked up off a battlefield and put in Guantanamo for the sake of our security, that we should work with the United States Congress to develop a way forward. They didn't say we couldn't have done—made that decision, see. They were silent on whether or not Guantanamo—whether or not we should have used Guantanamo. In other words, they accepted the use of Guantanamo, the decision I made. What they did say was, in terms of going forward, what should the court system look like? How can we use a military commission or tribunal?

And we'll work with the United States Congress. They have said, work with the Congress. I have been waiting for this decision in order to figure out how to go forward. I want to move forward. First of all, I stand by the decision I made in removing these people from the battlefield. See, here's the problem: These are the types of combatants we have never faced before. They don't wear uniforms, and they don't represent a nation-state. They're bound by an ideology. They've sworn allegiance to individuals but not to a nation. The Geneva Conventions were set up

to deal with armies of nation-states. You've got standard rules of war.

So this is new ground. This is different than any President has been through before, in terms of how to deal with these kind of people that you're picking up off a battlefield and trying to protect the American people from.

So we have about 600 or so there, and 200 have been sent back home. We'd like to send more back to their countries of origin. Some need to be tried, and the fundamental question is, how do we try them? And so in working with the Supreme—in listening to the Supreme Court, we'll work with Congress to achieve that objective.

And so your question is slightly loaded, which is okay; I'm used to it. But the idea of making the decision about creating Guantanamo in the first place was upheld by the courts. Or let's say, the courts were silent on it.

Let's see—Jessica [Jessica Yellin, ABC News]. Go ahead and yell it out.

Q. Yell it out. Alright, sir.

The President. Or don't yell it out.

North Korea/Missile Defense System

Q. It's been three days since North Korea fired those missiles. Yesterday you said you did not know the trajectory of the long-range missile. Can you now tell us, where was it headed? And if it were headed—if it had been headed at the United States, how would our national ballistic missile system have taken it down?

The President. I still can't give you any better answer than yesterday. I can embellish yesterday's answer. It may sound better. No, I, really, I haven't talked to the Secretary of Defense about that.

Our missile systems are modest—our anti-ballistic missile systems are modest. They're new. It's new research. We've gotten—testing them. And so I can't—it's hard for me to give you a probability of success. But, nevertheless, the fact that a nontransparent society would be willing to tee up a rocket and fire it without identifying where it's going or what was on it, means we need a ballistic missile system.

So that's about all I can tell you on that. Yes. Obviously, it wasn't a satisfactory answer.

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Yes, I think we had a reasonable chance of shooting it down. At least that's what the military commanders told me.

Rick. Let's get a little local here, Ricky. Do you consider yourself local or national? Hybrid? Are you a hybrid?

CIA Employee Identity Leak Investigation

Q. It seems trendy—

The President. Yes, very trendy. You're kind of a trendy guy. Got the gray shirt.

Q. Thank you very much. Mr. President, the work of U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald in prosecuting alleged corruption is well-known here in Chicago as well as nationally. It's my understanding that technically, he hasn't been reappointed to his position and serves at your pleasure. Do you have any plans to formally reappoint him to the post, or any other position at Department of Justice?

The President. As a special prosecutor?

Q. And would you give us your assessment of the job that he's doing?

The President. I don't have any plans to reappoint him because I haven't thought about it. I will now think about it, now that you brought it up.

The only—I can give you an assessment of how I thought he handled the case in Washington. I haven't been following the cases here. I thought in Washington, he handled the case with professionalism; he was very professional about it. You didn't see a lot of leaks; you didn't see a lot of speculation; you didn't see a lot of people, kind of, dropping a little crumb here for the press to chew on. And I really thought he handled himself well.

But as far as reappointing him as a special prosecutor, I don't know whether the Attorney General is going to do that or not. That's his choice to make.

Chris. Or, Paul. Paul.

Energy/Alternative Fuel Sources

Q. Mr. President, gas prices are high, as you know. Oil is at 75 a barrel. There is a

poll that suggests that three in four Americans are not content with your leadership on the issue, and that the State of the Union pitch for alternative fuel technology has fallen flat and is not moving. Why not call for an emergency energy summit and lift the issue to a higher priority?

The President. Well, I thought addressing the issue at the State of the Union was pretty much lifting it to a high priority. When you include it in the State of the Union, it means it's a top priority, and it is.

It took us a while to get in a position where we're reliant upon sources of energy from outside our boundaries, and it's going to take us a while to become less dependent. It just takes a while; things just don't happen instantly. I told the people, if I could lower gasoline prices with a snap of the fingers, I'd do it. And I've been talking about energy independence since I first got elected. And we've made some progress. We made progress by encouraging the spread of ethanol. And I think if you were to look at the facts, that ethanol has gone from low market penetration to pretty significant market penetration in selected parts of the country, relatively speaking, particularly in the Midwest.

There is more work to be done. There is a lot of ethanol plants being built as we speak, and there's incentives in Government law to do that. We've effected CAFE standards when it comes to light trucks, which will help consumers make a rational decision. We put incentives for people to buy hybrid vehicles in law. If you go out and buy a hybrid vehicle, you get a tax credit.

I happen to believe it's essential for us to promote nuclear power as a way to make us less dependent on natural gas from overseas, for example. Also, this will help us be wise stewards of our environment. We're spending a lot of money on technologies—battery technologies, for example—that would enable Chicago residents to drive the first 40 miles on electricity before one would have to use gasoline.

And so we do have a full-blown strategy to make this country less dependent on foreign sources of oil, to help relieve pressure at the gas pump. When the demand for crude oil in China rises, it affects the global price of crude oil, which affects your price of gaso-

line. And therefore, the strategy has got to be to diversify away from crude oil.

One of the issues that we're trying to get done here is that if you—if people are genuinely concerned about the price of gasoline, they ought to be supporting my initiative to encourage the construction of additional refinery capacity. Certainly, it's not the long-term solution, but it's an important solution for the short run. If you have constrained gasoline supplies and demand remains high, you're going to have higher prices of gasoline. We haven't built a new refinery in this country since the early 1970s. And so the truth of the matter is, I would hope people would contact their Members of Congress to insist that they support a—the bill that we ran up to the Hill, which would have made it much easier to permit and construct refineries.

So we have a comprehensive plan. This is a serious issue. I understand people are paying high gasoline prices here—it's like a tax. I understand it's like a tax. And we got a strategy to deal with it.

Anna. We're going to work our way down the row here. The Daily Herald, is that one of Pearson's competitors? It is?

Free Trade

Q. Well, we compete with everyone. My question is focusing, too, also, on technology. There's been a lot of mergers with companies in the technology industry, and one of the more recent ones was Lucent Technologies with Alcatel, which is French-owned. How do you feel about a lot of the foreign-owned companies buying out U.S. tech companies, especially those that have military contracts?

The President. We have laws that prevent sensitive technologies from being transferred as a result of sale and/or merger. And we watch that very carefully.

On the broader scale, I have no problem with foreign capital buying U.S. companies; nor do I have a problem with U.S. companies buying foreign companies. That's what free trade is all about. As a matter of fact, there are workers working here in Illinois because of foreign investment. A foreign company takes a look at Illinois; they like the tax structure; they like the governance; they like the workforce; and they invest. And when they invest, they create jobs.

A lot of the jobs in America exist as a result of foreign companies investing here in our country. So I believe in opening markets. I do believe in protecting secrets, but we've got laws on the books to prevent secrets from being transferred or vital technology from being transferred. But I believe in free flows of capital, and I believe in free trade. And that's not a given in the United States. There are people who say, "Well, we can't compete with China; let's throw up roadblocks; let's protect ourselves," or, "We don't want foreigners coming to invest in our country." I think that would be a mistake. I think that's the early signs of protectionist sentiments, which would mean our economy wouldn't grow.

In my State of the Union—the very same State of the Union that I addressed the energy problem—I talked about trends that are worrisome. One trend would be protectionism, and its corollary would be isolationism. An isolationist world basically says, "Don't worry about what happens overseas; we'll just worry about what happens here at home. Don't worry about HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa, not our problem. Don't worry about Darfur; it's not our problem. Don't worry about the fact that there's tyrannies in the Middle East; that's not our problem."

The truth of the matter is, all of these issues are our problem, and if we became isolationist, we would not do our duty to protect the American people and, kind of, lay the foundations for a better world.

People say, well, you know, China is too tough to compete with; let's just throw up tariffs. I completely disagree. I think competition is good and healthy. I think it's important to have a competitive world. It means that people are constantly producing a better product and a better service at a better price, which is good for consumers.

Yes, sir.

2006 Elections

Q. An aide to Judy Topinka was quoted as saying that given your low approval ratings in the polls, they prefer you to come here in the middle of the night.

The President. Didn't work. I'm coming at lunch. [*Laughter*]

Q. I'm wondering if you're offended by those remarks, and whether or not you think your presence may actually harm Republican candidates when you come out to campaign for them.

The President. I'm not offended. First of all, I think—am I offended that you read the person's remarks to me? No, I'm not offended that you were reading that at all, nor am I offended at what the person said. The first I've heard it was just then. And I'm coming to lunch. I think it's going to be a pretty successful fundraiser. And I—we will hold the House and the Senate. And I've spent a lot of time on the road. I like campaigning, and I'm proud she invited me. And—yes.

Q. [*Inaudible*—approval ratings, do you think that—[*inaudible*].

The President. That's up to the candidates to decide. I was invited; I gladly came. And I think we're going to have a pretty successful fundraiser for her.

Here's how you win elections. You win elections by believing something. You win elections by having a plan to protect the American people from terrorist attack. You win elections by having a philosophy that has actually produced results—with economic growth, for example—or kind of changing the school systems for the better or providing prescription drug coverage for elders. That's how you win elections. And I'm looking forward to these elections. I think you'll be surprised. Or maybe you won't be surprised. You're probably a sophisticated political analyst; you know what's going on.

Iraq/North Korea

Q. Mr. President, a lot of people here in Chicago tell us that they see an incongruity in your foreign policy. We're involved in a shooting war in Iraq; yet we have a leader in North Korea who has announced his affection for nuclear weapons and no hesitation to use them against the United States. Is your policy consistent between the way you have dealt with Iraq, the way you have dealt with North Korea? And if so, are we headed toward a military action in North Korea? And if so, can this Nation sustain military action on three fronts—Iraq, Afghanistan, and North Korea?

The President. I have always said that it's important for an American President to exhaust all diplomatic avenues before the use of force. Committing our troops into harm's way is a difficult decision. It's the toughest decision a President will ever make. And I fully understand the consequences of doing so.

All diplomatic options were exhausted, as far as I was concerned, with Saddam Hussein. Remember that the U.N. Security Council resolution that we passed when I was the President was 1 of 16, I think—16, 17? Give me a hand here. More than 15. [*Laughter*] Resolution after resolution after resolution saying the same thing, and he ignored them. And we tried diplomacy. We went to the U.N. Security Council—15-to-nothing vote that said, “Disarm, disclose, or face serious consequences.”

I happen to believe that when you say something, you better mean it. And so when we signed on to that resolution that said, disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences, I meant what we said. That's one way you keep the peace: You speak clearly, and you mean what you say.

And so the choice was Saddam Hussein's choice. He could have not fooled the inspectors. He could have welcomed the world in. He could have told us what was going on. But he didn't, and so we moved.

And we're in the diplomatic process now with North Korea; that's what you're seeing happening. Remember—remember, we put a coalition together at the United Nations that said, “Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences.” It was 15 to nothing. It wasn't a U.S., 1 to 14. It was 15 to nothing; other nations stood up and said the same thing we said.

So we're now working the diplomacy, and you're watching the diplomacy work, not only in North Korea but in Iran. It's kind of painful, in a way, for some to watch because it takes a while to get people on the same page. Everybody—not everybody thinks the exact same way we think. There are different—words mean different things to different people, and the diplomatic processes can be slow and cumbersome. That's why this is probably the fourth day in a row I've been asked about

North Korea—it's slow and cumbersome. Things just don't happen overnight.

But what you're watching is a diplomatic response to a person who, since 1994, has said they're—not going to have a weapon.

Q. Do you believe the United States [*inaudible*]—

The President. I don't accept that hypothetical question. You're asking me a hypothetical. What I believe is, we can solve the problem diplomatically.

Let's see here—Bret [Bret Baier, FOX News].

Upcoming G-8 Summit/Iran

Q. Mr. President, if the EU does not receive a definitive answer from Iran on the incentives package by next week, do you foresee the G-8 summit as being a springboard to bring that issue to the U.N. Security Council? And what do you say to Americans who are frustrated by the familiar roadblocks, it seems, of China and Russia on harsh sanctions?

The President. I said I wasn't going to answer a hypothetical; now you're trying to get me to answer a hypothetical. The G-8 will be an opportunity for those of us involved with this issue to make it clear to the Iranians that they—we're firm in our resolve for them not to have a nuclear weapon.

I talked to President Putin about North Korea; I also talked to him about Iran. I believe he understands the dangers of the Iranians having a nuclear weapon.

Some nations are more comfortable with sanctions than other nations, and part of the issue we face in some of these countries is that they've got economic interests. And part of our objective is to make sure that national security interests, security of the world interests, trump economic interests. And sometimes that takes a while to get people focused in the right direction.

You know, the first step of a diplomatic solution is for there to be a common goal agreed upon by those of us participating in the process. The goal in North Korea is a nuclear weapons-free peninsula—not just in North Korea but North and South Korea. And that's an important goal. It's important for the neighborhood to have embraced that goal.

The goal for Iran is for them to have a—verifiably get rid of their weapons program. The first step, however, is to—for their verifiable suspension. And by the way, if they will verifiably do which they said they would do in Paris, we will come back to the table. That's what we've said we will do.

And whether or not they—what their posture is, we're finding out as a result of the conversations of Mr. Solana of the EU and Mr. Larijani. I do appreciate Javier Solana's work on this issue. I saw him when I was in Austria, and I thanked him for doing a good job.

Yes. I'm trying to kind of tamp the follow-ups down a little bit here.

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Do I have a sense of urgency? I have a—I'm realistic about how things move in the world. Sanger will tell you; he's been covering North Korea since the mid '90s—these problems don't arise in a nanosecond. It takes a while for a problem to fester and grow, and then it takes a while to solve them diplomatically. That's just the nature of diplomacy. I wish we could solve them overnight. But I'm a realistic—one thing I'm not going to let us do is get caught in the trap of sitting at the table alone with the North Korean, for example. In my judgment, if you want to solve a problem diplomatically, you need partners to do so.

And a good partner to have at the table with us is China. They're in the neighborhood, got some influence in the neighborhood. Another good partner to have at the table is South Korea. They've got a lot at stake of what happens in North Korea, so it's important to have them at the table as well. My concern—I've said this publicly a lot—my concern about being—handling this issue bilaterally is that you run out of options very quickly. And sometimes it's easier for the leader of the nontransparent society to turn the tables and make a country like the United States the problem, as opposed to themselves.

The problem in North Korea and the problem in Iran is, their leaders have made choices. And what we're saying is, "There's a better avenue for you. Here's a different route; here's a different way forward for your people."

I said yesterday—and I truly mean this—I am deeply concerned about the plight of the folks who live in North Korea. I'm concerned about starvation and deprivation. I'm concerned that little children are being denied enough food so they can develop a mental capacity to be citizens of this world. I'm concerned about concentration camps. There is a better way for the people of North Korea, and their leader can make better choices if he truly cares about their plight. And we have made clear what that choice is.

Suzanne [Suzanne Malveaux, CNN].

North Korea

Q. Mr. President, if I could follow up, you say diplomacy takes time—

The President. Yes, it does.

Q. —but it was 4 years ago that you labeled North Korea a member of the "axis of evil." And since then, it's increased its nuclear arsenal; it's abandoned six-party talks; and now these missile launches—

The President. Let me ask you a question. It's increased it's—that's an interesting statement: "North Korea has increased its nuclear arsenal." Can you verify that?

Q. Well, intelligence sources say—if you can—if you'd like to dispute that, that's fine.

The President. No, I'm not going to dispute; I'm just curious.

Q. Our intelligence sources say that it's increased the number—its nuclear capability—

The President. Let me put it this way: The guy is dangerous—dangerous. He's got potential danger.

Q. It's increased its nuclear capabilities. It's abandoned six-party talks, and it's launched these missiles.

The President. Yes.

Q. Why shouldn't Americans see the U.S. policy regarding North Korea as a failed one?

The President. Because it takes time to get things done.

Q. What objectives has the U.S. Government achieved when it comes to North Korea? And why does the administration continue to go back to the same platform process if it's not effective in changing North Korea's behavior? Thank you.

The President. Suzanne, these problems didn't arise overnight, and they don't get

solved overnight. It takes a while. Again, I think if you look at the history of the North Korean weapons program, it started probably in the '80s. We don't know—maybe you know more than I do about increasing the number of nuclear weapons. My view is, we ought to treat North Korea as a danger, take them seriously. No question that he has signed agreements and didn't stick by them. But that was done during—when we had bilateral negotiations with him, and it's done during the six-party talks.

You've asked what we've done. We've created a framework that will be successful. I don't—my judgment is, you can't be successful if the United States is sitting at the table alone with North Korea. You run out of options very quickly if that's the case. In order to be successful diplomatically, it's best to have other partners at the table. You ask what we've done. We got the six-party talks started. And that's a positive development. It's a way to solve this problem diplomatically.

Bill.

Usama bin Laden

Q. Mr. President—

The President. I just thought for a minute you might have known more than I do about—when you say, definitively say, he's increased the number of weapons. I don't think we know that.

Q. Maybe you know, but you're not telling.

The President. That's an option. [*Laughter*]

Q. Mr. President, you said some time ago that—

The President. Maybe I don't know and don't want to tell you I don't know. Anyway [*laughter*]—

Q. You said some time ago that you wanted Usama bin Laden dead or alive. You later regretted the formulation, but maybe not the thought.

The President. I regretted the formulation because my wife got on me for talking that way.

Q. We suspected as much, sir. [*Laughter*] But the question I have is, it appears that the CIA has disbanded the unit that was hunting him down. Is it no longer important to track him down?

The President. It's just an incorrect story. I mean, we got a lot of assets looking for Usama bin Laden. So whatever you want to read in that story, it's just not true, period.

Q. You're still after him?

The President. Absolutely. No ands, ifs, or buts. And in my judgment, it's just a matter of time, unless we stop looking. And we're not going to stop looking so long as I'm the President—not only for Usama bin Laden but anybody else who plots and plans attacks against the United States of America. We're going to stay on the offense so long as I'm your President. And my judgment is, if we let up the pressure on them, the world is more dangerous. In the short run, we will bring these people to justice. We will use good intelligence. We will share information with our allies. We will work with friends. We'll bring people to justice. In the long run, the way you defeat this enemy is to spread liberty, and that's what you're seeing unfold.

Yes, sir. You are?

Mayor Daley of Chicago

Q. Carlos.

The President. Who are you working for, Carlos?

Q. CLTV, the Tribune TV station in town.

The President. CLTV.

Q. I work with Pearson, so—

The President. You do?

Q. Well, thank you, Mr. President. Last summer, when you were here to sign the transportation bill in Denny Hastert's district, you described Mayor Daley as "a great mayor." If you've read the morning papers, you'll find that Patrick Fitzgerald has secured the conviction of one of the mayor's top—former top officials for rigging city jobs to benefit the mayor's political workers. Does that change your assessment of Mayor Daley's tenure?

The President. I still think he's a great mayor. This is a well-run city, and he gets a lot of credit for it. He doesn't get sole credit, but he gets a lot of credit. He's a leader. The thing I like about Daley is he—when he tells you something, he means it. Like, he told me, he said, we're going to whomp you in the 2000 election. He meant it. [*Laughter*] He's a—yes, I'm proud to call

him friend. I'm proud to have shared my 60th birthday with your mayor.

Yes, sir. Yes, Mark.

Progress in Iraq/U.S. Armed Forces

Q. Yes, sir. Thank you. Mr. President, three Illinois National Guard units left this week for Iraq. At a time when there's discussion about withdraw or drawdown of troops, what are the families of these Illinois National Guardsmen to expect?

The President. They expect that their loved one will be participating in a noble and important cause. If I didn't think it was important, I wouldn't have put out the orders to have people go there. And if I didn't think we could win, I wouldn't be there. That's what they can expect. They can expect tough work, tough sledding, and they can expect a grateful Commander in Chief and a grateful nation for their sacrifices.

In terms of troop levels, those decisions will be made by General Casey. There's a debate in Washington as to whether or not we set an artificial timetable for withdrawal. That's what it's about in Washington, DC. And the answer is, absolutely not. You can't win a war if you have an artificial timetable for withdrawal. You can't have people making troop decisions based upon political considerations. It just won't work. It's unfair to those families that we're sending—of the kids we're sending over, and it's unfair to the troops.

Artificial timetable for withdrawal sends the wrong message to the Iraqis; they're seeing it's not worth it. There's a lot of Iraqis over there determined—trying to make up their mind whether they want to be a part of democracy or whether or not they're going to take to the hills and see what happens. Artificial timetable for withdrawal, kind of early withdrawal before this finishes, sends the message to the enemy, we were right about America. That's what they say. Al Qaida has said it's just a matter of time before America withdraws. They're weak; they're corrupt; they can't stand it; and they'll withdraw. And all that would do is confirm what the enemy thinks.

And getting out before we finish the job would send a terrible message to the troops who've sacrificed. We'll win. We'll achieve

our objective, which is a free country that can govern itself, defend itself, and sustain itself, and will be an ally in the war on terror. And we're making progress toward that goal.

The problem is that the enemy gets to define success better than we do. See, they'll kill innocent people like that; they don't care. Life is not precious to them. And they're willing to kill women and children in order to achieve a tactical objective. And it gets on our TV screens. And people mourn the loss of life. This is a compassionate nation that cares about people, and when they see people die on their TV screens, it sends a signal: Well, maybe we're not winning.

We occasionally are able to pop in with great success, like Zarqawi or 12 million people voting. But increasing electricity in Baghdad is not the kind of thing that tends to get on the news, or small-business formation is not the kind of thing to get—or new schools or new hospitals, the infrastructure being rebuilt that had been torn apart. And I'm not being critical. I'm just giving you a fact of something I have to deal with in order to make it clear to the American people that the sacrifice of those families is worth it. We are winning. And a free Iraq is an essential part of changing the conditions which causes the terrorists to be able to recruit killers in the first place.

For a long period of time, our foreign policy was just, kind of, excuse tyranny and hope for the best. It didn't work. The world may have seemed placid, it may have seemed calm, but beneath the surface was resentment and hatred, out of which came an attack that killed 3,000 of our citizens.

And so I am committed to the spread of liberty. It's, after all, how we were founded. And there's a debate here in the United States that says, well, maybe it's too much for the United States to insist others live in a free world. Maybe that's just too unilateral. I view that as cultural elitism for people who say that. It's like saying, we're okay to be free, but you're not.

I believe freedom is universal, and I believe etched in the soul of every person on the face of the Earth is the desire to be free. And I know that freedom has got the capacity to change regions of the world for the better.

Our press corps is bored with this story, but I'm going to tell it anyway—the Koizumi story. [*Laughter*] That's what you get when you get familiar with people—they can anticipate your remarks.

I hope you thought it was interesting that Prime Minister Koizumi and I went to Graceland. It was really a lot of fun, wasn't it? It's an interesting part of the development of our relationship, from one in which Japan was the enemy of the United States and today, the son of a person who fought the Japanese and the son of a person who resented the United States are close friends. We talk about keeping the peace. We talk about working together to change the world for the better: What do we do? How do we feed people who are hungry? How do we build roads in Afghanistan? What do we do?

And so what happened? What happened was, is that Japan adopted a Japanese-style democracy after World War II, and the conditions of our relationship—the condition of the country changed; the attitude changed; and our relationship changed.

The Far East was a pretty difficult place. I know we spend a lot of time talking about the Far East today because of North Korea, but if you really look at the development in the Far East, it's pretty remarkable, isn't it? South Korea has emerged into a vibrant capitalist society. Japan has still got a little hang-over from their previous activities in the region, but nevertheless, is a thriving partner in peace. Taiwan is making progress. China has got opening markets. Their economy is growing. Their entrepreneurial class is strong. They need to—the political system needs to evolve. But nevertheless, the region is relatively peaceful except for one outpost; one system that's not open and transparent; one system that doesn't respond to the will of the people; one system that's dark, and that's North Korea.

It took a while for that peaceful evolution to occur. And that's what's going to happen in the Middle East. It is. And it's hard work. And I want those parents to know that. These are historic times. We will lose if we leave too early. The stakes of success are vital, but a free Iraq is going to help inspire others

to demand what I believe is a universal right of men and women.

General Casey will make the decisions as to how many troops we have there. And that's important for the families to know. It's really important. General Casey is a wise and smart man who has spent a lot of time in Baghdad recently, obviously. And it's his judgment that I rely upon. He'll decide how best to achieve victory and the troop levels necessary to do so.

I spent a lot of time talking to him about troop levels, and I told him this; I said: You decide, General. I want your judgment, your advice. I don't want these decisions being made by the political noise, by the political moment. It's just unfair to our troops, and it's unfair to their families. It's the reasoned judgment of our military commanders that the President must count on in order to achieve a victory that is necessary to help make this country more secure. And that's exactly how I'm going to make my decision.

So if the people are listening, they need to know I'm proud of their families. The cause is noble and necessary. And the size of the troops that will be there will depend upon the sound judgment of our military commanders.

Thank you for this press conference. I've enjoyed it. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 10 a.m. in the Museum of Science and Industry. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago, IL; Rep. Jesse L. Jackson, Jr., of Illinois; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; President Hu Jintao of China; President Vladimir Putin of Russia; President Roh Moo-hyun of South Korea; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; Patrick J. Fitzgerald, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois and Department of Justice CIA leak investigation Special Prosecutor; Judy Baar Topinka, candidate for Governor of Illinois; Secretary General Javier Solana of the Council of the European Union; Ali Larijani, Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council and President Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad of Iran; and Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq.

**Remarks at a Lunch for
Gubernatorial Candidate Judy Baar
Topinka in Chicago**

July 7, 2006

Thank you all. Go ahead; please be seated. Thanks for coming. I am honored to be here. I proudly stand with Judy Baar Topinka as the next Governor of the State of Illinois.

Laura sends her best. Like Judy says, "Sorry Laura didn't come." I say, "Yes, most candidates say that." [Laughter] I'm really lucky that Laura said yes when I asked her to marry me. And I think the country is lucky to have her as the First Lady. And she sends her very best to Judy. She, like me, hopes that Judy will win. And she, like me, knows that when Judy does win, she's going to be a fabulous Governor for the people of Illinois.

I'm glad to be here with the Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud you're here. Thanks for coming. Somebody said, "What is it like dealing with Hastert?" I said, "Solid as a rock." [Laughter] He's predictable. You can count on him. He's doing a fine job as the Speaker of the House of Representatives. I love working with you. We're getting a lot done. And I want to thank you for being here.

Jim Edgar, what a good man. Thanks for coming, Governor. I appreciate you being here. We're members of the ex-Governors club. [Laughter] And we got to know Jim and Brenda well during his time as Governor of Illinois, and he was a dandy. All you got to do is aspire to be as good as Jim Edgar, and you'll do a great job, Governor Topinka. He is—he set the standard, didn't he, for Governors here in Illinois. And I'm proud you're here, and thanks for helping Judy Baar.

I want to thank all the candidates who are here. There's a lot here, so I'm not going to try to rip them all off, but I do want to thank you for running statewide—Lieutenant Governor candidate, attorney general candidate, treasurer candidate, comptroller candidate. Maybe I ought to say it just to see if I can get some ink for you: Joe Birkett, running for Lieutenant Governor. [Applause] Yes, let's do it that way—Christine Radogno running for State treasurer. Senator, thanks for coming. Senator Dan Rutherford running

for secretary of state—there he is. Senator Bill Brady, he's not running for anything statewide, but he's here. Senator, thank you.

It's a good sign to see all the senators. When senators and members start to swarm around, it means they're smelling victory. [Laughter] They want to be close to the next Governor. Judy Baar, it's a good sign when you've got people like Tom Cross, the Illinois house minority leader. He's from your district, right, Speaker? Yes. Stu Umholtz is running for attorney general. Thanks for coming, Stu. Yes.

I want to thank Andy McKenna and all the grassroots activists who are here. This has been an incredibly successful fundraiser. And I thank you for your hard work in supporting Judy Baar. It's hard to do a big fundraiser like this, and it takes a lot of good organizers and people willing to go out and pick up the phone and call and ask. And you've done a fantastic job. It's a good sign. People don't want to back somebody who can't win. And you're here to back Judy Baar because, one, you like her; two, you trust her; and, three, you know she can win and become the Governor of the State.

So I thank you all for contributing mightily to her campaign, and I urge those of you who are involved in grassroots politics to kind of warm up and get ready to turn out the vote come November. She's going to need people putting up the signs and stuffing the letters and making the phone calls and urging the good people of this State—Republican, Democrat, and independent—to show up to the polls and do their duty and to vote for Judy Baar. She's going to do a fine job as you're Governor. She's a good, fine, honest person who knows what she's doing. She's got a track record. She can get the job done.

Having been a Governor, I know what it means to be a Governor. You got to have somebody who can set an agenda; somebody that doesn't try to be all things to all people; somebody that says, "Here's what I'm running for, and here is what I intend to do," and then is going to do it. That's what the people of Illinois want. They don't want a bunch of fancy footwork and empty slogans. They want a practical person to say, let's make this State, for example, the best State in the country to be an entrepreneur. Let's

make sure this is a progrowth economic policy in the State of Illinois.

We share a philosophy: The role of government is not to create wealth; the role of government is to create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit flourishes. And Judy Baar wants to make sure Illinois is entrepreneurial heaven for people here.

And so, how do you do that? How do you do it? Well, the first thing you do is make sure you keep the people's taxes low. And it works. It works. We have been—in Washington, the Speaker and I and others, working together, have proven that low taxes can increase economic vitality. We believe that when a person has more money in his or her own pocket to save, spend, and invest the way she or he feels fit, the economy grows.

Remember what's happened in the last 5 years. We have faced a recession, a stock market correction, corporate scandals, an attack on the United States of America, two major military operations to defend ourselves, national disasters, high energy prices. And yet this economy—first quarter of 2006, grew at 5.6 percent. Today we found out we added another 121,000 new jobs. The national unemployment rate is 4.6 percent. The unemployment rate in Chicago is 4.3 percent. Productivity is high. More people own a home than ever before. Small businesses are being created. This economy is strong, and the reason it's strong is because we cut the taxes on the American people.

And the fundamental question is, can we keep them low to make sure the economy grows? Here's the interesting debate in Washington—and I'm proud that Dave McSweeney is here, because he gets it. He's running for the United States Congress. He understands what I'm about to say. Here's the trap: In Washington they say, "Oh, all we got to do is raise taxes to balance the budget." That's not the way Washington, DC, works. Yes, they'll raise your taxes, but they will figure out new ways to spend your money. The best way to balance the budget—and Judy Baar understands this—is to keep progrowth economic policies in place through low taxes and be wise about how we spend the people's money.

Our progrowth policies are working. Pretty soon we're going to announce the new deficit

projections. I told the people that if we're wise about spending the money and keep progrowth policies in place, we'll be able to cut the deficit in half by 2009. What's really interesting is that when you cut the taxes and your economy grows, guess what happens. You yield more tax revenues. It's working. And, Speaker, I think we're going to have a pretty good projection here in a couple of weeks that will remind the American people that it's good policy to let you keep more of your own money, that we got to set priorities with your money in Washington, DC, and we can grow our way out of our deficits.

You know, the country has got some tough decisions to make. And that is, do we fear the future and try to wall ourselves off from the world, or do we welcome the competition the world provides and shape the future? And Judy Baar Topinka understands that we shouldn't fear the future. We ought to put good policies in place to keep us the most innovative, technologically advanced country in the world.

And you start with making sure you've got a good education system. When I was Governor of Texas, I used to say, education is to a State what national defense is to the Federal Government. In other words, it's got to be the number-one priority of your Governor. And you got to have a Governor that's willing to set high standards and willing to challenge the status quo if you find mediocrity and failure.

We've got too much stateism in public education, too much excuse-making, too much process. See, it's so simple to give up on an inner-city kid and say, "Well, you're this age; you're supposed to be here," or just kind of shuffling children through. It is inexcusable behavior. And therefore, we passed the No Child Left Behind Act, which says, we'll have high standards. And we expect people, in return for Federal money, to measure.

And the reason we want people to measure is because we want to know. We want to know if the curriculum may need to be corrected; we want to know if a school is failing to meet standards; we want to know if children are simply being shuffled through the school system without regard to their capacity to read and write and add and subtract.

And, Judy Baar, you're going to hear all the excuses for no measuring. You know, it's too much State interference, this; you're teaching to test. If we hold people to account, we will make sure children are not left behind.

You know what's happening here in the city of Chicago? You're reading scores are up. And the reason why is because you measure and you correct problems early, before it's too late. I look forward to working with Governor Judy Baar Topinka to make sure we institute the No Child Left Behind Act so the great State of Illinois is on the leading edge of education reform.

If you want to be a good State, in which people risk capital, and a competitive State, you got to make sure you use your community college system wisely. The community college system is a vital part of making sure America is able to compete in the global economy because the community colleges have the capacity to work with employers to help train people for the jobs which actually exist. And I know Judy Baar Topinka is going to be—wisely use the community college system here in Illinois to make sure this State remains competitive and a good place for the entrepreneurial spirit to flourish.

I look forward to working with her to get rid of our dependence on oil, foreign sources of oil. We got a problem. When the demand for oil goes up in China or in India, it causes the price of crude oil to go up, which causes the price of gasoline to go up in Illinois. And we need people who have got good common-sense policies in place, and one common-sense policy is to make sure that we have the opportunity to grow ourselves out of dependence on oil.

I love ethanol, and I intend to work with the Governor here to make sure that is widespread, not only throughout Illinois but throughout the United States of America. Thank you for your understanding that we need alternative sources of energy.

One of the toughest jobs she's going to have is—fight off all the lawsuits. I don't know if the trial lawyers are that tough here in Illinois. I suspect they are. *[Laughter]* They're real tough in Washington, DC, too. You know, I met an ob-gyn coming through the line here. First of all, I can't think of

a more noble profession than being an ob-gyn. But there's a problem in the United States of America. We got these junk lawsuits running good doctors out of practice. You know, there's over 1,500 counties in America that don't have an ob-gyn because of all these junk lawsuits. And that's not right, and it's not fair, and it's inexcusable. And you better have yourself a Governor who's willing to look those trial lawyers right in the face and say, "We need tort reform to make sure Illinois holds up the promise for all its citizens."

And by the way, I want to thank the Speaker. I think not one time but two times, he's passed medical liability reform out of the House of Representatives. When I first went to Washington, I thought it was a mistake for there to be a Federal medical liability bill. See, I thought the States can handle it. Then it was explained to me that all these lawsuits are costing the Federal Government—and you—an additional \$28 billion a year.

So we got some pretty big health programs. We got Medicare and Medicaid and veterans' benefits. And so when you get all these junk lawsuits out there, it's not only causing premiums to rise, which you pay for, it's also causing doctors to practice defensive medicine, which you pay for.

And so they estimate the tab to the Federal Government is about \$28 billion a year. So medical liability reform is not just a State issue, it's a national issue. And I appreciate the Speaker's leadership on getting a good bill out of the House. It's time for the Senate to stop playing politics and pass good medical liability reform for the sake of the patients in the United States of America, for the sake of good quality health care.

These are historic times we're living in, and this country can make the decision to be confident about the future or to retreat from the future. And I believe we ought to be confident. Our entrepreneurial spirit is strong; this economy is good; and we can put good policies in place—good educational policies, good research and technology policies. The Speaker passed a good bill, by the way, that will double the amount of Federal research—Federal monies that go into research for basic science. It's a smart thing to do. It's a way to make sure America stays

on the leading edge of change and technology.

In order to make sure that this country is competitive, you've got to have Governors who understand the proper role of Government and how to properly stimulate the entrepreneurial spirit. And I firmly believe Judy Baar Topinka is that right person, and I want to thank you for supporting her.

Before the Speaker and I get on the helicopter and go see one of the incredibly advanced plants, I do want to talk about the war on terror. Before I do so, I do want to say a really cool place—if you're wondering where a good place is to celebrate your 60th birthday—[*laughter*]*—yes, you ought to try—yes, okay, thank you. Thank you. I'm saying, come to Chicago. It's a good place to celebrate your birthday. That's all I'm trying to say. Had a fabulous night last night with the mayor. They asked me at a press conference about the mayor. I said, the mayor is a man of his word. He said, "You're going to get clobbered in Chicago in 2000, and he kept his word."* [*Laughter*]

By the way, if you go to the Science Museum, take your kids. It is a special place. I know there are some members of the board who are here—it is really great. And I'm looking forward to shedding my entourage one of these days and spending a little quality time there at the museum. [*Laughter*]

But at my press conference, they spent a lot of time talking about the world. And I told them today, like I'm going to tell you now, that my biggest job is to protect—is to work to protect the American people. And I think about it all the time. They ask, what's the job like, to be President. And the answer to that—job is, you make a lot of decisions. It's a decisionmaking experience. Governor, you'll find it to be a decisionmaking experience.

Rule one on decisionmaking is you make decisions based upon principle, not based upon polls and focus groups. You can't make good decisions if you're chasing a poll. You can't make the hard decision necessary to secure this country and to yield peace if you're worried about whether somebody thinks you're popular. You got to stand for what you believe and do what you think is right. And after September the 11th, I vowed that I

would use our national assets to protect the American people. I think about it; I talk about it; I act on it every day of my Presidency.

The enemy we face are a bunch of totalitarians. They have a philosophy. They believe that if you don't adhere to their view, that you ought to be punished. They don't believe in freedom of worship; they don't believe in freedom of speech. They're willing to kill innocent people in order to achieve their objectives. They have clearly stated their objectives, which are to drive the United States out of parts of the world so they can develop safe haven from which to launch further attacks.

There are some people who want to see the world the way they'd like it to be, and I can understand that. My job is to see the world the way it really is. And therefore, so long as I'm the President, we will stay on the offense and bring these people to justice before they hurt the American people again.

We must keep the pressure on all the time. And one of the central fronts in the war on terror, one of the theaters of the war—not the sole theater but a theater in the war on terror—is Iraq. And I know it's on your minds. It's on my mind. We're facing a group of killers there that can't stand the advance of freedom. It should say something about the nature of the people we face when they see a young democracy beginning to grow and they're willing to kill innocent people in order to try to stop the march of freedom. That's one way to describe the enemy.

What is it about a free society that bothers these people? What's troubling about a society in which people are able to worship an Almighty freely if they choose to do so? How come you can't stand dissent in the public square? The reason why is because they have a vision that is opposite of that. And that's why they're doing—taking desperate measures to stop the advance of a democratic society.

And the enemy has got the capacity to kill on a daily basis, which clouds our TV screens. And therefore, some Americans are wondering whether or not we can win. And to those Americans, I say, not only can we win, we are winning. I want them to remember that 12 million people went to the polls in

the face of incredible threat; 12 million people stood up and said, "We want to be free." There's now a unity Government. Victory will be achieved when Iraq, a free Iraq, can sustain itself and govern itself and defend itself. And the mission of the United States of America is to help that Government succeed. It's in our national interests there be a free Iraq.

People have often asked me, "Would I have made the same decision I made before, knowing what I know today?" And the answer is, I didn't have that luxury, but getting rid of Saddam Hussein has made America and the world a better and safer place.

And now the question is, does this country have the will and the patience to stand by a new democracy so they can realize the benefits of liberty? And when I flew over to Baghdad to see Prime Minister Maliki, one of my missions was to determine whether or not he had the capacity to lead and to make the tough decisions. I came to the conclusion he does. And my other part of the mission was to tell the Iraqi people, when America gives her word, America will keep her word.

You know, there's a lot of talk about troop levels. Let me just tell you this—and I spoke to a reporter today who asked about Illinois National Guard troops going overseas, and my answer to him was this—it was a long answer, but this is part of the answer: I'm going to make my mind up based upon the measured judgment of the commanders on the ground, and they will make their mind up about what is necessary to achieve victory in Iraq. We will not be set—determining troop levels based upon politics. I will be making the troop level decisions based upon what General George Casey recommends. We owe that to our troops; we owe that to their families; we owe that to the Iraqi.

I do not want the enemy to think that we will withdraw because of politics. The enemy should not think that when they hear talk about artificial timetables for withdrawal, that's what the American people think, nor that's what the Congress will do. This United States Congress and this President will stand squarely behind our troops and stand squarely behind a strategy for victory.

So our short-term strategy is to defeat the enemy overseas so we don't have to face

them here at home. And we're keeping the pressure on them. And I appreciate the Speaker's steadfast support. The long-term strategy, we will defeat the ideology of hatred with an ideology that's hopeful and light. And that's the ideology of freedom. And it's worked. It's worked in the past. Freedom has been able to convert enemies into allies.

I—one of my alltime favorite stories is to talk about my relationship with Koizumi. It was enriched, by the way—my relationship reached a new level of friendship when we went to Graceland. *[Laughter]* Isn't that interesting? It should be, when you really put that visit in the context of—in historical context.

After all, my dad and his dad were both old enough to be participants in—observers of World War II. They were enemies. And yet, here his son is getting on the airplane—the son of the Japanese fellow getting on the airplane with George H.W. Bush's son, on Air Force One, to fly down to go to Graceland. And we were talking about the peace. That's what we were talking about. We were talking about the issue of North Korea and the need for Japan and the United States, as well as South Korea and China and Russia, to send a clear message to the leader of North Korea: Your behavior is unacceptable.

I was thanking him for the thousand troops he had in Iraq. It's pretty remarkable, when you think about it, that the Japanese Self-Defense Forces were sent to Iraq to help secure liberty for a new democracy. We talked about how to help people in Afghanistan. We talked about HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa. We're talking about how to make the world a better place, yet 60 years ago we were at war.

You've got to ask yourself what happened. How can that possibly be? Is it just circumstance? My answer is, no. One of my predecessors, Harry S. Truman, believed in the power of liberty to transform an enemy to an ally, and so he worked to see to it that the Japanese were able to adopt a Japanese-style democracy.

Liberty has got the capacity to change the world. We shouldn't be surprised when 12

million people vote in Iraq, because I believe—and I hope you do too—that the concept of liberty is universal; that it's not just a concept for Americans or Methodists, it's a concept that rests in the soul of everybody. That's what we believe in America. That's the basis of our founding.

And so the idea of our enemy becoming a friend shouldn't be a surprise. The lessons of World War II and the aftermath should be lessons applied today in helping us chart our path to victory in the war against these terrorists. Someday, an elected leader of Iraq, a free Iraq in the heart of the Middle East, will be sitting down with an American President talking about keeping the peace. And generations of children will be better off for it.

Thanks for helping Judy Baar. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:27 p.m. at the Drake Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Andy McKenna, chairman, Illinois Republican Party; Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago, IL; former President Saddam Hussein and Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea.

Remarks at Cabot Microelectronics Corporation in Aurora, Illinois

July 7, 2006

The President. Listen, thanks for the tour. The Speaker and I really enjoyed coming. Bill, appreciate you.

William P. Noglows. It's an honor.

The President. It is an honor to be here.

This is an innovative company that is a sign of the times that are coming. This is a company that strives upon our country's greatest asset, which happens to be the brainpower of our citizens. And what's amazing as you walk through the labs and meet the people working here, you say, "What's your degree in?" Let me just say, there wasn't a lot of history majors—physicists, chemists, Ph.D.s, people with advanced degrees. It is clear that in order for this country of ours to be competitive in the future, we've got to understand the nature of the jobs of the future,

and these jobs are going to require people who have got math and science skills.

And so one way to make sure this country is competitive is to enhance math and science in early grades and encourage people to take math and science in the later years. And there's all kinds of ways to do that. One is to encourage Advanced Placement programs in our Nation's schools and help train 30,000 teachers in Advanced Placement. Another is to get people from institutions like this to go into our middle schools and high schools and say, "It's okay to be a scientist," you know, "Math and science will be important for your future." In other words, try to inspire people. We call that an adjunct professor program.

We've got a role at the Federal Government to make sure that we're research oriented in a technology-driven economy, and that is to spend your money on basic research, so that, for example, nanotechnology is a really important part of the economy—an important growing part of the economy. And I believe and the Speaker believes—as a matter of fact the House of Representatives believes that it makes sense to double the basic research budget of our Federal Government to help companies like this stay on the leading edge of change.

And so we're here because we want our fellow citizens to understand that we've got some really innovative people here in our country, and that in order for us to be competitive in the future, we've got to emphasize math and science and research and technology.

And so I want to congratulate you for running a good company. I want to thank the people who work here for making you look good. And I thank the Speaker for getting a bill out of the House that funds the American Competitiveness Initiative that I sent up to Congress. The Speaker did good work on that. I call upon the Senate to get it done. This will be a commitment to our Nation's future, so that people won't have to fear the future, because we intend to shape the future.

Anyway, thanks for letting us come by. Proud to be here. You're a great company. Thanks for the good work you do. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:12 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to William P. Noglows, chairman and chief executive officer, Cabot Microelectronics Corp. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

July 1

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President declared a major disaster in New York and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding beginning June 26 and continuing.

July 2

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

The President declared a major disaster in Maryland and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, flooding, and tornadoes beginning on June 22 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in Ohio and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, straight line winds, and flooding during the period of June 21–23.

July 3

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he met with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Then, in the Roosevelt Room, he participated in a signing ceremony for H.R. 5403, the Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006.

The President announced his intention to appoint Kirk Van Tine as a member of the Presidential Emergency Board No. 239 and,

upon appointment, to designate him as Chair.

The President announced his intention to appoint Roger P. Nober and Robert E. Peterson as members of the Presidential Emergency Board No. 239.

July 4

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Fort Bragg, NC, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Benny Smith. He then toured U.S. Army Special Operations Command.

Later, at the 3d Brigade, 82d Airborne Division Dining Facility, the President had lunch with military personnel and their families.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. While en route aboard Air Force One, he participated in an interview with Stars and Stripes newspaper.

During the day, the President met with Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to discuss the situation in North Korea.

In the evening, in the Residence, the President attended a dinner party to celebrate the Fourth of July and his birthday.

July 5

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing and met with the National Security Council. Later, he met with members of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba, who presented him with their official report. He then traveled to Alexandria, VA.

Later in the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC.

In the afternoon, the President had lunch with Vice President Dick Cheney.

The President announced the appointment of Helgard C. Walker as a member of the District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission.

The President declared a major disaster in Delaware and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding beginning on June 23 and continuing.

July 6

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had a telephone conversation with President Vladimir Putin of Russia. Then, in the Oval Office, he participated in a photo opportunity with Alexa Ostolaza, the 2006 March of Dimes national ambassador.

In the afternoon, the President had a working lunch with Prime Minister Stephen J. Harper of Canada. Later, he traveled to Chicago, IL, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Dave Kruger.

During the day, in the Blue Room, the President and Mrs. Bush participated in an interview with Larry King of CNN.

The White House announced that the President will host President Traian Basescu of Romania at the White House on July 27.

July 7

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had breakfast with local business leaders.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Aurora, IL, where he toured Cabot Microelectronics Corp. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President declared a major disaster in New Jersey and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding beginning on June 23 and continuing.

**Nominations
Submitted to the Senate**

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

**Checklist
of White House Press Releases**

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as

items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released July 1

Statement by the Press Secretary on U.S.-Canada agreement on softwood lumber trade

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to New York

Released July 2

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Maryland

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Ohio

Released July 3

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 5403

Released July 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow and National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley on the North Korea missile launches

Statement by the Press Secretary on North Korea missile launches

Released July 5

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Delaware

Fact sheet: Basic Pilot: A Clear and Reliable Way To Verify Employment Eligibility

Released July 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Transcript of a briefing on the President's Trip to the G-8 Summit in St. Petersburg, Russia

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Bush To Welcome President of Romania to the White House

Released July 7

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to New Jersey

Fact sheet: A Day in Chicago: President Bush Highlights Economic Growth and Innovation

Fact sheet: Job Creation Continues—5.4 Million Jobs Created Since August 2003

**Acts Approved
by the President**

Approved July 3

H.R. 5403 / Public Law 109–239

Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006